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GALATIANS

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A DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY
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ST PAUL'S EPISTLE
TO THE
GALATIANS

"
A DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY

By

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE Epistle to the Galatians is on one subject, and barely goes beyond it. There is hardly a word about Heaven, or the general Resurrection, or the Second Coming of the Lord : nothing about Prayer or Thanksgiving, nothing about Salvation or Repentance. It deals with a great crisis, and gives an effectual check to the Judaistic tendency to substitute what was regarded as Mosaic ceremonial for the free grace which is in Christ. Paul's appeal for the liberty engendered by the Cross is forcible but affectionate. He argues, illustrates, reminds, convicts, leaves no stone unturned, that he may secure the Churches from this subtle error. His own personal history is freely drawn upon to attain this purpose, and the blessed results of simple faith in the crucified Saviour are set in battle array against the rocks and snares of false teaching.

The result is that we have not merely a controversial treatise with which to hammer an assailant, and which Martin Luther found so effective, but also a deeply spiritual letter which sets before us the

Epistle to the Galatians

way of life, and which puts into our hand the key to the working of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the believing Christian.

Some short studies on leading topics in the Epistle are appended.

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PART I

I

PAUL AND THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA

GAL. i. 1, 2

1. Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead ;)

2. And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia.

Who were the Galatians ? To what race did they Gal. i. 1, 2. belong ? Where did they live ? Can we trace their existence in later times ? Are they still to be found in their old country or in some other land ?

These questions are more easy to ask than to Galatia in
Paul's Days. answer ; but they cannot be put aside altogether, even when we are studying the Epistle for devotional purposes, that is, to gain guidance and stimulus for our daily lives and thoughts.

No one has thrown so much light on the matter in modern times as Professor Sir William Ramsay, of Aberdeen, who has travelled, studied, and written with unceasing diligence, so as to bring before our minds the state of things in Asia Minor in St Paul's day. Galatia stood at that time not only for a particular district, but also for ■ Roman province

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i. 1, 2. north of the Taurus, which included many districts, and contained, among other centres of population, the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. The first visit which St Paul paid to this region is shortly described in Acts xiii. and xiv.

The population was mixed. There was a considerable Jewish trading element; a Graeco-Roman element, which made for law and civilisation; and an uncivilised, barbarous native element, partly Celtic and partly of an aboriginal stock—probably Hittite. There were roads, thanks to the Romans, in all directions, but accommodation must have been rough, brigandage plentiful, international jealousies numerous, misunderstandings frequent. The Greek language would be understood more or less in most places, but people thought and felt in their mother tongue. In this connection we may recall the reference to “the Speech of Lycaonia” in Acts xiv. 11.

Paul's First Visit to Galatia. Such were the people amongst whom Paul found himself in his first great missionary journey. He had left Cyprus behind him; he had parted with Mark; and he had crossed the Taurus in company with his fellow-labourer Barnabas, a man of very different calibre from himself. These two had proclaimed the Saviour first to those who were of the stock of Abraham, and had taught them that justification—that is to say, acceptance with God—was to be attained through faith in the Lord Jesus,

Paul and the Churches of Galatia

not by the law of Moses. Then they had turned Gal. i. 1, 2. to the Gentiles, and had been the means of bringing light and salvation to many. Wherever these two went they founded a community of Christians—partly Jewish and partly non-Jewish—of all classes and ranks, including men, women, and children. On their return journey they confirmed these Communities in the faith, encouraged them to stand fast amid persecution, and appointed elders over the Churches. These elders were no doubt carefully instructed, for much depended on them when (as is generally supposed) there were no written Gospels, and all teaching was oral.

Some time later (Acts xv. 36) the state of these ^{Paul's} Second Visit. Churches was laid upon Paul's heart. "Let us go again," he said to Barnabas, "and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do." Simple words, but they sprang from a devoted heart, and they led to great results. He found, as he had suspected, Judaism working like leaven everywhere, but he carried with him the apostolic decree of Acts xv., by which Christianity was preserved from becoming a mere Jewish sect.

Later still, difficulties increased and multiplied, ^{The Letter.} and at last Paul was led to write the letter which lies before us, of which it has been said that every sentence is a thunderbolt. It must have cleared the air at the

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i. 1, 2. time, and it clears the air still. Luther said of it, "This is my Epistle, I am wedded to it." It stands for truth, for liberty and for a Christ-like life. It breaks up the fallow ground of our heart ; it puts Christianity on a right foundation ; it sets forth the moral and spiritual influence of the cross of Christ, and the new-creating power of the Spirit.

—How to
read it.

Before studying this Epistle, portion by portion, it is very helpful to read it as a whole and at a sitting. Give, if necessary, two or three hours to it, having solemnly prepared your heart for the task by prayer. Let the Epistle produce its legitimate impression on your heart and life. Some parts will pass over you without causing any definite result, but others will reach you, stir you, humble you, and prompt you to put on the Lord Jesus Christ afresh, and to renew your devotion to Him. May the Eternal Spirit Who inspired Paul to write, inspire us to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the message contained in this stirring letter !

Lord, open Thou mine eyes to see, my mind to understand, and my heart to realise and love the Truth as it is in Jesus, especially as it is set forth in this Epistle, that it may make its mark on my thought and character, and that it may confirm me in the faith and life of the true Christian. I ask this for Thine own Name's sake. Amen.

Líbero digo, esta epístola es mía, es mi pensamiento. Representa verdad, libertad y una vida como la de Cristo. Rompe los terrenos duros del alma; presenta Cristianidad sobre una base fundamental; presenta la influencia moral e espiritual de la cruz de Cristo y el poder renovador del Espíritu.

II

THE AUTHORITY OF THE WRITER

GAL. i, 1, 2

1. Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead ;)

2. And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia.

THE authority of a letter depends on that of the Gal. i, 1, 2. writer. Most of Paul's Epistles begin with his ^{Paul's Mission.} name. In some, as in the Thessalonians, that is enough. In the letter to Philemon he describes himself as a "Prisoner of the Lord." In the Philippians he is a "Servant," literally a "Bond-servant." But generally he is an Apostle, that is to say in plain words, a Missionary, one sent forth on a mission from another Person. As Christ was sent forth by His Father, so Paul was sent forth by Christ, through the Holy Ghost (Acts xiii. 4). When we read the words with which he introduces himself we perceive that Paul had something very particular in his mind, which caused him to be definite

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i. 1, 2. and emphatic in the description of his sacred mission. We are almost reminded of the questions put to John the Baptist when the deputation from the Pharisaic body asked him, "Who art thou?" (John i. 19). Paul says in effect, "I am a missionary." "Are you," comes the next question, "on a mission from men? Did they send you with a message?" "No." "Are you writing under human instructions, as an agent for some particular personage or community?" "I am not." "What, then?" "I write, speak, live, through the instrumentality of Jesus Christ and of God the Father, who raised Him from the dead."

How it found him. We are here taken back in thought to the events at the beginning of Acts xiii. Paul had already been a Christian for some ten years, and was happily engaged with other prophets and teachers in Antioch, the chief town of Syria, a city having at the time a population of some 200,000. There was plenty to be done in such a city: every kind of evil might be found there; and it may never have occurred to Paul or to any of the other workers that they were to leave their "settlement" and their ministrations and go off into other lands.

The Call. Then suddenly and unmistakably the Holy Ghost said, "Separate to Me Barnabas and also Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts xiii. 2)—Barnabas, doubtless an original disciple, and

The Authority of the Writer

Saul, who had been a blasphemer and persecutor, Gal. i. 1, 2, but who had been rudely awakened, suddenly enlightened, and wholly changed. These two were sent forth by the Holy Ghost, with prayer and the laying-on of hands by the leaders of the Community (Acts xiii. 3). Step by step from that time onwards Paul had been doing his Master's work, and perhaps he was never more conscious of his mission than when he was laboriously writing this letter with his own hand.

Paul evidently took for granted that to be sent forth by the Holy Ghost was to be sent forth by Christ. The Holy Ghost is the true representative or "Vicar" of Christ in the heart of the believer. Our Lord prepared the way for this great truth in His Last Discourse (John xiv.-xvi.). It is through the Spirit that the ascended Saviour now works and teaches. But Paul does not stop there. He associates the name of the Father with that of the Son, and points to one thing which the Father had done to establish the truth of Christ throughout all ages. He had raised His Son from the dead. Turning back to Paul's first Galatian sermon, delivered at Antioch in Pisidia, which may be taken as a type of all his synagogue addresses, we find him laying down this as the foundation of the Truth as it is in Jesus: "God raised Him from the dead" (Acts xiii. 30). On that occasion he

Foundation
Truths.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i. 1, 2. appealed for evidence of the fact to many witnesses, the original followers of the Lord, and, as we can see from 1 Cor. xv., the majority of these were still alive when he was writing. There was no possibility of deception as to this serious and important event. The mission of Christ was thus guaranteed by the Father; and this fact, coupled with his own marvellous experiences, gave Paul absolute confidence as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus. He spoke with authority as his Master had done.

It is interesting that Paul associates others with him as he writes, but we do not know who they were; nor do we know for certain the place from which he writes, which may have been Ephesus, nor yet the exact date, which must have been about A.D. 56 or 57, possibly earlier.

A Lesson for Ourselves. As we meditate on Paul's mission we do well to ask whether we also have a mission. Are we really dead unto sin and alive unto Christ? Have I yielded my body a living sacrifice? am I seeking the real welfare of others? am I living a pure, simple, patient, steadfast life? am I ready, if God should plainly call me, to do something special for Him: of course I must make sure that it *is* a call, and I must wait and watch and pray. Then I must not be disobedient to the heavenly vision. New work may be troublesome and risky, but I

The Authority of the Writer

must go forth bearing Christ's message and Gal. i. 1, 2. perhaps His reproach, sustained by the prayers of the Community which I leave, and sure of the very present help of One Who will never leave me nor forsake me.

III

THE GREETING

GAL. i. 3-5

3. Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,
4. Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father :
5. To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Gal. i. 3-5. "GRACE and Peace," with these two precious "Grace" and words both Peter and Paul greet those to whom "Peace." they write. As time goes on words such as these are in danger of losing their significance. "Good-bye" does not mean so much as "God be with you"; "adieu" is uttered by many who forget that it signifies "we commit you to God." Grace is free, undeserved favour, and Peace is its fruit. Both spring ultimately from the Father, who giveth to all men liberally; and both reach the Christian through our Lord Jesus Christ, the medium of divine love. All that the Father hath is Christ's. As this is true concerning the mission in the first verse, so is it true concerning the blessing in the third verse.

The Greeting

But St Paul has much in his mind, and cannot Gal. i. 3-5. close his greeting in the ordinary way. Something ^{The Evil World.} must be said about Christ, in order to stamp the essential truth of Christianity on the heart of these Galatians there and then. Accordingly he proceeds, "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age."

The age in which Paul lived was an evil one. The whole atmosphere of human existence was an evil one. There was evil without and within. Alas ! this is true still. We each know the plague of our own heart, and we see signs of the same moral plague all around. No one is immune. All are liable to be entangled in the net of iniquity. We can echo the words of the Psalmist, " Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord ; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net " (Ps. xxv. 15), and again, " Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me : for Thou art my strength " (Ps. xxxi. 4). Disentanglement must come from above. There is no question here about improving the age : the problem is rather how to be extricated from its ever-present evil influence. How can anyone save us without himself being stained ?

Thanks to the will of God, even our Father, and —And thanks to the loving obedience of His Son, there is Deliverance through a way. Christ has done something for this very Christ. purpose. What has He done ? Given us excellent

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i. 3-5. precepts ? Yes. Set us an example that we should follow in His steps ? Yes. But something more is needed. He gave. Yes : Christianity is faith in a gift—but what a gift ! He gave *Himself*, His own Self, for our sins—for the sins of Paul, of the Galatian, of the Englishman, for yours, for mine.

—The Crucified.

Read this old story with new eyes every day that you live. Read it in the light of other passages, e.g. Rom. v. 8, “God setteth forth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Compare the way in which Peter, Paul, and John express this same truth : then turn back to the Master’s own words about the Ransom ; and behold Him fulfilling them on the Cross.

Christ and
the Need of
the Age.

But how does the sacrifice of Christ extricate the human soul from this present evil age ? The question sets us thinking not only about the gracious work of the Lord Jesus, but also about the human heart. Even at its worst, it may be reached by the spirit of truth, which is the spirit of life and love. Experience shows, and this Epistle will show, how life, love, and liberty flow from the Cross. Christ crucified puts the key of our prison-house into our hands : make sure of this.

No wonder that Paul ends with a doxology—“to Whom be the glory through all eternity.” Why do not we Christians begin each day with a note of praise to our Redeemer ?

IV

A PERVERTED GOSPEL AND THE TRUE EVANGEL

GAL. i. 6-10

6. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7. Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

8. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

9. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

10. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

“I MARVEL,” says Paul, “that ye are so quickly Gal. i. transferring yourselves from Him Who called you in 6-10. the grace of Christ unto a different gospel, which is not really another, but rather there are some who are disturbing you and wishing to pervert the gospel of Christ.” If Christ marvelled at the unbelief of the Nazarenes, well might Paul be surprised at the fickleness of the Galatians. He had been the means of calling them, but the real call was from God

The Charge.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i.
6-10.

Himself, and the grace of God in Christ was the gospel message. How different from this gospel of free grace was the gospel (not worthy of the name) of the Judaistic disturbers ! They were twisting the message round so that it seemed like the true gospel, and yet was different. May we be kept from a twisted gospel !

—**Its Gravity.** “But,” he continues, “even if we ourselves or an angel from heaven preach a gospel other than, or contrary to, what we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so now again I say, if any one is preaching a gospel other than that which ye received, let him be accursed.” The language is strong, but expresses exactly what this Prince of missionaries felt. His business was not to persuade God to alter the terms of the message, but to persuade men to receive the message. His object was not to please men by toning down the gospel out of deference to Jewish or non-Jewish prejudice, but just to do what his Master sent him to do.

A Heart-Searching Call. Let us note the energy and emphasis of this utterance. It was sorely needed then, and is needed still. There is a heart-searching call here, not only for the minister but for every Christian as such to be faithful in creed and in life. What is the real, everlasting gospel of Christ ? Have I received it ? Have I stuck to it ? Or have I substituted something

A Perverted Gospel and True Evangel

else for it ? These serious questions must be asked Gal. i.
at times. 6-10.

O Spirit of Truth, breathe into my heart ; uproot error ; enable me to see and (if called) to teach the true saving message of Thy grace.

Christianity for us and for all hangs on the gospel ^{The Truth} —literally the *evangel*. It is the key to the Christian ^{of the} *Gospel*. position and the secret of its power. The word never occurs in the Old Testament, but is to be found a hundred times in the New Testament, eighty of the references being due to St Paul. The *evangel* (or, as the people in the East call it, the *injil*) is the spring of all true evangelical religion, and gave the name to those who brought about the great spiritual Revival of the eighteenth century. We sometimes say there are four Gospels. There are four records or memoirs, but only one gospel, and it is gathered up in Jesus Christ, Who came, lived, died, rose, ascended, and is coming again. It is inclusive, but it is also exclusive. Christ is the Way ; and there is no other way. We must believe it, and pass it on by our life and teaching. Every Christian believer has to be as wide as Christ in sympathy, and as narrow as Christ in loyalty. Which do we find hardest ? Perhaps the latter is hardest in the present age, for every one is terrified at the idea of being called narrow-minded. Our daily duty is to seek and exercise the spirit of

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i.
6-10.

sympathy, and to add to it the spirit of loyalty to truth. Paul seems to have been raised up for this very purpose.

Grant, O Lord, that I may be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as I know that my labour is not in vain in the Lord.

V

PAUL'S CONVERSION—AND AFTER

GAL. i. 11-24

11. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

13. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it :

14. And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

15. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

16. To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen ; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood :

17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me ; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

18. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

20. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

21. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia ;

22. And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judæa which were in Christ :

Epistle to the Galatians

23. But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

24. And they glorified God in me.

Gal. i.
II-24.

Paul's
Justification.

PAUL proceeds to justify his strong dogmatic language by calling attention to the special circumstances of his mission. "The gospel which I preach is not in accordance with human ideas, nor did I receive it by man's tradition, nor was I taught it by word of mouth, but it came to me by revelation of Jesus Christ."

He goes on to explain what he means, and begins by taking us back to his past history—as he does so often. "You heard of my manner of life in Judaism, how beyond measure I was a persecutor of the Church of God and laid it waste; and how I advanced in Judaism above many of my contemporaries in my nation, being more exceedingly zealous for my ancestral traditions." Such, as described by himself, had been Paul's own position. He had been a traditionalist, a fanatic of the most extreme school, a fierce persecutor. What chance was there that such a one should be changed?

But God comes on the scene. "God separated me, in His own purpose and choice, from my very birth, and called me, all unworthy as I was, by His free electing grace, and saw fit to reveal His Son in me¹ that I might preach Him among the

¹ See Part II., I., "The Revelation of the Son of God in the Soul."

God's Deal-
ings with
him.

Paul's Conversion—and After

nations." How much Paul packs into this sentence! Gal. i. Compare the beginning of the Romans: "Paul,^{II-24.} called to be a missionary, separated unto the gospel of God concerning His Son, through Whom we received grace and a mission, in order to effect obedience to the faith in all nations."

Such an experience of special grace was a gift, <sup>A Call to
Paul—and
to us.</sup> and brought a call with it. Paul never forgot it, and we must not forget it either. Some of us have been suddenly awakened, called out of darkness and bondage into life and liberty, through a revelation of Christ. With others the dawn has come gradually, and we cannot fix the day or place when the Lord Jesus became a living, bright reality to our souls. Still, whatever light we have received we must use for Him, gladly and at all costs.

"Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee!"

The natural thing for Paul to do after his conversion would be to return straightway to Jerusalem, which was the headquarters of the two opposing bodies, and put himself under the orders of the Apostles. But this was not what he did. "I conferred not with flesh and blood. I took counsel with no human being. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me.<sup>After
Conversion.</sup>

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i.
II-24.

But I went away to Arabia [the borders of which reached nearly up to Damascus], and I returned to Damascus." What he did on his return we learn from Acts ix. He was with the disciples at Damascus, and straightway he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogue that He is the Son of God ; and he increased in strength, and confounded the Jews that dwelt in Damascus, pressing upon them that this is the Christ. "At length"—he continues—"after a period of about three years I went up to Jerusalem to tell my story to Peter, and I stayed with him a fortnight." He passes over in this rapid survey the circumstances of his escape from Damascus which are detailed in Acts ix., and which are vividly described in 2 Cor. xi. 30-33, and proceeds : "But no other of the apostles did I see, save only James the Lord's brother."¹

Why this Statement?

Why does Paul say all this ? to show that his ministry and mission were independent of human instrumentality. He was not in any strict sense a delegate from the Apostles. He represented Christ. "What I write, behold, before God I lie not"—strong words, intended to emphasise his independent position as having received his mission direct from Christ. He pursues the matter further. "Then I went to the regions of Syria

¹ This expression does not prove that James the Lord's brother was one of the Twelve ; compare Luke vi. 13-16.

Paul's Conversion—and After

and Cilicia. But I was unknown by sight to the Gal. i. Churches in Judea which were in Christ," *i.e.* to **II-24.** the Christian Communities which had sprung up in various parts of Judea over and above the Jerusalem Church—we know very little about them—"only they kept hearing that 'he who once was our persecutor now preaches the faith which he formerly destroyed,' and they glorified God in me."

Such is Paul's story, to the truth of which he pledges himself before God. St Luke's narrative (Acts ix. 26-30) describes the suspicions with which the Jerusalem disciples regarded him, and the loving conduct of Barnabas, who brought him to the Apostles, *i.e.* to Peter and to James, the Lord's brother, and the way in which he spent his time in Jerusalem in discussions with the Hellenists, and how it became needful to send him off first to Cæsarea, and then to his old Cilician home, Tarsus, where he must have remained some years, probably seven or eight.

It would have been interesting to hear something of the Cilician ministrations. In Acts xv. 41, we read again of Paul's journeys "through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches." Perhaps some of these very Churches were founded by him in this earlier period. At any rate we may be sure that wherever he went he testified to the grace of

Paul and the
Disciples.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i.
II-24.

God and proclaimed the gospel of Christ, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile; his own immediate relatives probably heard the message first from his lips.

A Personal
Duty.

Has God taught us something which has changed our lives? Then let us hear the message (Mark v. 19), "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." Thus Paul's closing words in the chapter may be true in your case—"they glorified God in me," not "they glorified me." Never was there a case in which God took the whole matter into His own hands more decisively and effectually than in Paul's; and all the glory is God's. We too, when we realise that change, that revelation of Christ which we call conversion, say again and again—

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

VI

A LATER INCIDENT IN JERUSALEM

GAL. ii. 1-10

1. Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

2. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach, among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

3. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised :

4. And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage :

5. To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour ; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

6. But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me : God accepteth no man's person :) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me :

7. But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter ;

8. (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles :)

9. And when James, Cephas, and John who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship ; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

Epistle to the Galatians

10. Only *they would* that we should remember the poor ; the same which I also was forward to do.

Gal. ii.
I-10.
A Notable
Visit.

PAUL resumes his survey of the past. He does not attempt to give the whole story or even to record all his visits to Jerusalem, for example, that which is referred to in Acts xi. 30, and again in chapter xii. 25, when he and Barnabas took alms from Antioch to the poor saints in Judea. "After fourteen years," he writes, "I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me." How much work had been accomplished in these years ! They probably count from his first visit to Peter after his conversion. At the intermediate visit Peter was in prison, and afterwards went elsewhere. "But I came up by revelation, and related to them [i.e. to the leaders] the gospel which I am in the habit of proclaiming among the Gentiles ; but I did so privately to them of reputation, lest I should be running and had been running in vain" (i.e. lest I should imperil my work through the outcry of the influential and clamorous Judaistic party, thus seeking to undermine my teaching).

A Difficult
Position.

The position was a difficult and delicate one ; and Paul was one of a deputation from Antioch, and had great responsibility laid on him. When appointed to the task he had evidently sought the Lord's guidance in the matter, and it was revealed to him that he should go. He had to be con-

A Later Incident in Jerusalem

ciliatory and yet firm. "But neither Titus, though Gal. ii. he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised" **I-IO.** —the battle raged round circumcision—"and that because of the false brethren brought in unawares, who slipped in that they might spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, so as to bring us into bondage." It was a case of Judaic ritual *versus* Christian liberty; and the conflict was critical and severe.

"To whom we yielded in subjection not for an hour, for there must be no temporising, so that the truth of the gospel might remain entire for you." Although Paul was all things to all men in things indifferent, there were times in which he had to stand like a rock; so it is still. We too have need of the meekness of wisdom, that we may know when to give way and when to stand fast.

"But, to continue, from the men of some reputation, whatever they were once makes no difference to me—God accepteth no man's person." Perhaps they had been men of high authority in the Jewish community before becoming Christians. "These men of reputation added no new conditions or limitations to my gospel; but rather, on the contrary, they saw that I was entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, as Peter was for the circumcised (for He who wrought in Peter for the mission to the circumcised wrought in me also

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. ii.
1-10.

for the Gentiles). And perceiving the grace given unto me, James, and Cephas, and John, who were reputed to be pillars of the Church, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised, only adding that we should bear in mind the poor (*i.e.* the impoverished Jewish Christians at headquarters), the very thing which I was eager to do."

A Division
of Labour.

This narrative is intensely interesting. When we consider the hot fanaticism of the Judaistic faction on the one hand and the fervour of Paul on the other, it would seem as if there must be a schism in the Community, and that the discordant elements must be parted for ever; but in God's Providence the three leaders at Jerusalem were enabled to solve the difficulty. There was to be a division of labour within the Church instead of a split from the Church—of course not an absolute division, but rather an understanding that while Peter and the rest aimed especially at the circumcised, Paul and Barnabas should give their strength in the direction of the Gentile world, but should never forget to exercise the spirit of love towards the saints in Judea.

—At an
Apostolic
Crisis, and
its Lesson.

When we lay this section of Paul's letter alongside of Acts xv. we see that neither narrative is complete, and this has led some students to suppose

A Later Incident in Jerusalem

that two different conferences are referred to. Gal. ii.
This, however, is almost certainly not the case. ^{I-10.}
Paul gives us what may be called the inner private
conference, while St Luke gives us the result of
a more public gathering which followed; and the
presence of Christ by His Spirit was reckoned upon
throughout the crisis.

The practical lesson for us all is, that in every
emergency we should seek the Lord's guidance
without any reservation, and then act as under
the guidance of the Holy Spirit, trusting in Him to
influence our judgment.

VII

PETER AND PAUL AT ANTIOCH

GAL. ii. 11-18

11. But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

14. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

15. We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

18. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

Peter and Paul at Antioch

ONE more bit of history is given us, and in it Paul, Gal. ii. Barnabas, Peter, and James are again concerned. It is ^{11-18.} well to note in passing that the Galatians were evidently supposed to know who these last named personages were, though possibly they had not seen them.

To resume the narrative : “When Peter came ^{Peter} to Antioch (in Syria), which was the metropolis of ^{rebuked} by Paul. Gentile Christianity, I withheld him to the face, because he was to be condemned. For before that certain came from James, he used to eat in company with the Gentiles, but when they came he began to draw back and separate himself, being afraid of those of the circumcision.” Here is the old enemy, timidity, which Peter no doubt thought he had conquered, but by which he was suddenly foiled. Here, too, is the old habit of thought and action which had restricted his meals in early days (Acts x. 14), but which he had broken through at the solemn word of God, Who made no difference between Jewish and Gentile Christian, “purifying their hearts by faith” (see Acts xv. 9).

Certainly Peter was to be condemned for this ^{A Just Con-}demnation. vacillation. The moment was critical ; the weakness was in danger of turning into a panic. The rest of the Jewish Christians played the hypocrite likewise with him, so that even Barnabas—yes, even Barnabas—was led away by their hypocrisy. Let it be noted, too, that it was all hypocrisy, all

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. ii.
II-18.

a pretence. Every one of these Judaic Christians, and of course Peter and Barnabas, knew better, but for the moment human frailty got the mastery over deep convictions of truth. Meanwhile Paul was observing. Peter, whose influence was all but paramount, was the real mischief-maker, and he must be opposed openly and at any cost.

A Crucial
Question.

“When I saw that they were not walking straightly, in the direction of gospel truth, I said to Peter in the presence of them all, If thou who art ■ Jew livest on Gentile principles and not on Jewish [lit. ethnically, not Judaically], why—that is to say, on what ground, whether of reason or revelation—dost thou compel Gentiles to Judaise ?” How could Peter answer such a question ? He must have been speechless. His mistake was glaring. If the Church had escaped from being rent in two on the question of circumcision, if the liberty of Christendom was established once for all, if, as Peter had said (Acts xv. 11), “through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we, the Jews, shall be saved, even as they, the Gentiles,” what room was there for separation at meal-time, i.e. for a caste distinction ?

Paul’s
Position
further
Illustrated.

“We,” Paul continues by way of exposition to the Galatians, almost using Peter’s former words, “are naturally Jews and not Gentile sinners ; we, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but rather through faith of Jesus Christ,

Peter and Paul at Antioch

we also have believed on Jesus Christ, that we Gal. ii. may be justified by faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Compare Ps. cxliii. 2, "In Thy sight shall no man living be justified"—words which may have flashed into Paul's mind as he spoke.)

"But if, while we Jews thus seek to be justified in Christ, we ourselves are found sinners, making Mosaic caste-distinction essential, and so reverting to the old system which failed to justify, then Christ becomes the minister of sin [*i.e.* of a sin-system], and Christianity becomes subservient to Judaism. If I build up that middle wall of partition, Mosaic ceremonial, which I have pulled down through faith in Christ, I become a transgressor, and let go of the one sure ground of justification."

What was Peter's mistake? He had reverted to the ceremonialism in which he had been brought up. After associating himself with those of other nations in consequence of a direct revelation from heaven (Acts x. 28), he had lapsed into Judaistic exclusiveness, thereby causing others to stumble, and grieving the Spirit of God. It was nothing less than a calamity; and it needed a strong, keen man like Paul to detect and undo the evil. It was no pleasure to Paul to expose the weakness of Peter and of the rest, but it was an object-lesson never to be forgotten, and as needful now as ever.

Peter's
Mistake.

VIII

THE SECRET OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

GAL. ii. 19-21

19. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

20. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

21. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Gal. ii.
19-21.
A Personal
Statement.

PAUL has been gliding out of history into what he cared for much more, namely, the doctrine of the gospel of Christ; and he now lays bare the secret of his own spiritual life. "I through the law," i.e. through its pressure, which showed me my inability, "died to the law as a means of justification, that I might live unto God." The law-system, legalism, had become to me a sin-system, failure; so I cut myself adrift from it. It could not give my guilty conscience peace by its ritual, it could not repress the evil of my heart; it meant bondage within and condemnation without.

The Secret of the Christian Life

I practically said of it, 'Away with it, crucify it.' Gal. ii. 19-21. But I should never have broken off from the law had I not had something better before me, namely, life unto God."

What does this mean? and how is it effected? Crucifixion with Christ. Paul proceeds to answer, and gives us the mystery of the gospel of Christ. "I am crucified with Christ." He, my true, anointed King, has been nailed to the tree as a curse and a sin-bearer. I see Him hanging there for me, and by faith I appropriate His sacrifice. I lay my hand on His sacred head, as formerly I may have done on some of the typical offerings, and so what was done to Him I regard as done to me. In this sense I share His crucifixion. But Christ, though crucified, still liveth; and I still live. I am by no means in a torpid or neutral condition. I was never so much alive as when I cut myself adrift from sin and clave to Christ, Who drew me, and I followed on. He lives in me by His indwelling, inworking Spirit, as the vine lives in the branch by its sap. The life I now live in the flesh is a life of faith, that is, of constant realisation and deliberate identification. It is the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

Let us note the order. First came divine love, then came love's self-sacrifice in Christ, then

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. ii.
19-21. my heart opened to receive Him by faith, then comes the new life; and all is thenceforward continuous, and comes under the description of the Walk of Faith.

Devotion of Christ and of the Christian. "I do not frustrate or neutralise the free grace of God; for if righteousness were by the law, then Christ's death would have been vain and needless." To depend once more on the rites of circumcision and meats, in a word, on caste, as a condition of salvation, would be to revert to the old system and to do despite to the finished work of the Son of God. His life-blood was shed for the ratification of the New Covenant, and the coming in of the new implies the close of the old legal and ceremonial system.

Galatians and Ephesians compared. It is interesting to compare this passage with two others in the Epistle to the Ephesians. First, "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it" (v. 25); secondly, "Christ loved us, and gave Himself up for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God" (v. 2); and here, "Christ loved me and gave Himself up for me." This means personal appropriation of the self-sacrificing love of the Son of God.

The Christ-Life in us. Now let us ask ourselves, What sort of a life am I called upon to live? A life of devotion, submission, and imitation. This is the completion of the Christ-life. It is also a life of receptivity,

The Secret of the Christian Life

feeding on Christ by faith and drawing in the Gal. ii.
sweet and powerful influence and inbreathing of His ^{19-21.}
Spirit, and it is sure also to be a life of expectation,
for I must ever look onwards as well as upwards
for the great day.

O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that
He might undo the mischief caused by the devil,
and make us sons of God and heirs of eternal
life: Grant to us that we, having this hope in
Him, may purify ourselves even as He is pure;
that when He shall appear again with power and
great glory, we may be made like unto Him in
His eternal and glorious kingdom, where with
Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghost, He
liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without
end. Amen.

IX

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

GAL. iii. 1-9.

1. O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you ?
2. This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ?
3. Are ye so foolish ? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh ?
4. Have ye suffered so many things in vain ? if it be yet in vain.
5. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ?
6. Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.
7. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.
8. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.
9. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Gal. iii.
1-9.

If the Epistle had stopped at the end of the second chapter, the Galatians—and we also—would even then have had a great gift. But Paul was led by the Spirit to go further, to present the truth of the gospel in various ways, and so to fortify

Justification by Faith

it by many considerations, some of which were Gal. iii. specially adapted for Jews, whilst others are of I-9. equal value for us all.

"O thoughtless and inconsiderate Galatians, who has been bewitching you and talking you over, that you should not obey the truth, seeing that Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth and depicted before your very eyes as crucified?" Paul had not held up a crucifix, which would have been materialistic and unworthy, but had given a graphic or pictorial narrative, such as we find in each one of the Gospels. He did the same thing at Corinth (1 Cor. i. 23; ii. 2). In the outline of his first address to the Galatians of Antioch we find the same teaching. Probably all the Apostles and Evangelists acted in the same way, and the old, old story of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus is still, as it was then, the historical basis of the Christian appeal to those who are dead in trespasses and sin.

"This only I would learn from you: was it in consequence of the works of the law that ye received the Spirit; or was it in consequence of the hearing of faith?" Was it something which you *did*, or something which you *heard*, which brought you that blessing? "Are ye so thoughtless? Having made a beginning in the Spirit, are you finishing in the flesh? Again, have you suffered so many things (in the way of affliction) in vain—if it really must be in vain?"

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. iii.
I-9.

“He therefore that conferreth upon you the Spirit, and worketh among you mighty deeds, is it in consequence of the works of the law or in consequence of the hearing of faith that He does this? Go back to the patriarchal age for an answer. What do you read there concerning the father of the faithful? Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned or accounted unto him for righteousness.”

Abraham's
Faith.

Here Paul quotes one of the foundation texts of Genesis (xv. 6), which sets forth the doctrine of justification by, or from, or in consequence of faith. It was not because of something which Abraham did in the way of legal obedience—he lived hundreds of years before Moses—but because he believed God and took God's word to be true, that God looked upon him with approval. The Galatians had, no doubt, heard the text before, for it was a favourite one with Paul. He continues, “Know therefore, or ye know, that they which are of (actuated by) faith are children of Abraham; and the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith,¹ preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, In thy seed shall all the Gentiles be blessed. So they that are of (actuated by) faith are blessed in company with faithful Abraham.”²

—And our
own.

Again and again we have to ask ourselves, What

¹ See Part II., III., “Justification by Faith.”

² See Part II., VII., “The Blessing of Abraham.”

Justification by Faith

is my foundation and hope? On what am I resting? Gal. iii. On something which I have done, or on my belief ^{I-9.} in something which God has done? On my righteousness, or on God's? On poor human legalism, which, if weighed in the balance of divine judgment, must be found wanting, or on the wealth of divine grace which has laid my sin on the Lamb of God and appeals to me to look and be saved?

The contrast between the true and false foundations of peace with God is clearly set forth in the tenth chapter of the Romans, where St Paul says of Israel (ver. 3) that "they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Justification in the sight of God is unattainable through anything that we can do, because the heart-searching God sees all the defects of our inward life. We have to cast away all hope in ourselves, to confess our utter unworthiness, to cry out of a broken heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and to submit—though it is humbling to have to do it—to God's way of acceptance in Christ and Him crucified. The whole attitude of our soul towards God is then changed. We receive Christ, and with Him we receive pardon and peace, insight and power—God's righteousness is yielded to, and we rejoice in Him, the God of our Salvation.

The True
and False
Foundations.

X

THE TRUTH DRIVEN HOME

GAL. iii. 10-12

10. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse : for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

11. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident : for, The just shall live by faith.

12. And the law is not of faith : but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

Gal. iii.
10-12.
Question and
Answer.

PAUL pursues the subject further, and presses the Scriptures of the Old Testament into the service of the gospel. He had appealed to the record of Abraham's faith (Gen. xv. 6), and to the promise in which the Gentile world was interested (Gen. xii. 3 and xxii. 18), which promise was available for all who shared Abraham's faith. Still, the question as to the position of those who sought at least some measure of justification by the works of the law had to be settled. Did they not stand higher in God's sight than ordinary people ? Was the Pharisee, for example, no better than the publican ?

The Truth driven Home

Paul answers, "As many as are of (*i.e.* dependent Gal. iii. on) the works of the law are under curse." How ^{10-12.} can this be? Surely they are excellent people? They may be so in their own eyes, and even in the eyes of their neighbours, though that is not so likely. But God seeth not as man seeth, He sees the heart, and failure is stamped on the heart which rests on its own righteousness. Paul is led <sup>The Blessing
and the Curse.</sup> to affirm that there is no half-way house between absolute failure and absolute success, between self and Christ, between curse and blessing. "For it is written, Cursed is every one who abideth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

Now where is this written? We have to turn <sup>The
Quotation.</sup> to the Book of Deuteronomy, that is, to the parting speeches of Moses, and to the curses which were to be uttered on Mount Ebal (chap. xxvii. 26). The words in the Authorised Version stand thus: "Cursed be he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them." St Paul follows the old Greek version, with which some of the Galatians were doubtless acquainted, and with which the more ancient Samaritan version agrees, inserting the word "all" in his text. He had a right to do this, for certainly, to confirm the words of the law means to abide in all the words of the law. No exception is possible. We cannot pick and choose.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. iii.
10-12.

We cannot demand exceptions. God is a sovereign Judge, and imposed a law on Israel, not that they should be justified by it, but that they should order their steps according to it.

Law and
Gospel.

He continues : "Is anyone justified by (*i.e.* in consequence of) the law? No. By the law no one is justified before God." This is plain, for "the just shall live by faith" (Hab. ii. 4). That is to say, the righteous man is dependent for life and acceptance, not on what he does, but on what he believes. So says Paul to the Romans (i. 17): the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from, or in consequence of, faith unto faith, as it is written, "The just shall live by faith"; as he had already said in Galatians (ii. 20), "The life which I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God." It is important to observe in passing that while faith is thus made the condition of divine approval, it is faith which rests on the word, the faithfulness, and the love of God Himself. God seeks that we should believe in Him. This is what Satan hates, and God loves.

Who is "the
doer"?

"The law is not of or from faith, but the man that doeth them shall live in them" (Lev. xviii. 5, repeated in Ezek. xx. 11 and Neh. ix. 29). This sentence reappears in Rom. x. 5: "Moses describeth the righteousness which is from the law, That the man which doeth them shall live

The Truth driven Home

in them." At first sight this passage seems opposed Gal. iii. to the whole tenor of the discussion, and leads to self-righteousness. But where was "the doer" to be found? The question is answered in the third of Romans, where the Jew is reminded of his own Scriptures: "There is none righteous, no, not one."

The argument is short and sharp. Probably Paul is only reiterating what he had spoken by word of mouth. He has cut off all boasting, all self-righteousness, all legalism. He wished the Pharisee to take the place of the publican, and to beat upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Observe, he is not dealing with heathenism, but with legalism. He knew it in his own experience. He saw its subtlety and insidiousness, and he was persuaded by God that it was an unsound foundation to build on, and that every high thing in the human heart must be pulled down.

This serious truth is still the outstanding difficulty to the Jew. He has not realised the meaning of Isa. liii. 6, which teaches not only that *all* have gone astray, but also that the Lord has provided a way of redemption for all.

XI

CHRIST CRUCIFIED—THE SOURCE OF REDEMPTION

GAL. iii. 13, 14

13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Gal. iii.
13, 14.
The
Crucified
Christ.

—Bringing
Redemption
for Jew and
Gentile.

PAUL now develops his argument. “Christ hath redeemed us—bought us off—from the curse of the law, being made a curse on our behalf; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangeth on a tree.” Little did the Jews think when they shouted out, “Crucify Him, crucify Him,” how the accomplishment of their malicious desire would become one of the foundation-stones of redemption.

To be crucified is to be hanged on the tree. So says St Peter (Acts v. 30), “Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree;” and again (x. 39), “Whom they slew and hanged on a tree.” In the first of these passages he was speaking to Jewish hearers, and in

Christ Crucified

the second to Gentiles. In a third passage, and Gal. iii. when writing to Christians (1 Pet. ii. 24), he ^{13, 14.} thus explains the meaning of this significant fact: "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." Christ was a sin-bearer. "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Isa. liii. 4). He was the Lamb of God, the sin-bearer for the world (John i. 29). This was the very purpose for which He was manifested (1 John iii. 5). The Crucifixion was the crisis of His mission. It was the outward and visible sign of sin-bearing. It was deliberate, conscious, foreordained, effectual. It preceded and led up to death, and yet was distinct from it. The Lord bore sin, and tasted death. These were the two stages of His offering of Himself to the Father on our behalf.

Now what Peter preached and John wrote about, Paul set forth in these words. Christ came under the ceremonial curse of the law by being crucified, and in this way, the only way possible, He was in a position to bear that which the law-breaker was condemned to endure. Was disobedience to a loving Father something shameful and horrible? So was crucifixion. Did sin end in death? So did crucifixion. The difference, the vital difference, is this—Disobedience brought moral curse, while crucifixion involved a ceremonial one. The life of Jesus was unstained.

The Death of
Christ and
the Father's
Purpose.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. iii.
13, 14.

His mind was in absolute harmony with the mind of His Father. He was a Lamb without blemish and without spot, so that His bloodshedding, *i.e.* the completed act of self-sacrifice, was effectual for the setting forth of the divine love and the doing away of all the human evil.

A Message
to Jew and
Gentile.

Primarily this passage is for those who were under the law (compare chap. iii. 4, 5); but we who are by nature “sinners of the Gentiles” have the same way of pardon and the same way of peace as the Jews have. Christ took away—He bore—the sin of the whole world. No child of man is excluded. Every one of us can claim Him and can say, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

“Upon a Life I did not live,
Upon a Death I did not die,
Another’s Life—Another’s death—
I stake my whole eternity.”

Promise and
Blessing.

“That the blessing promised to Abraham might be for the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we, whether Jews or Gentiles, might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” See how we come out from the darkness of curse into the sunshine of blessing. The promise made to Abraham included a world-wide blessing in Christ, and this promised blessing stood for the undoing of the curse from which all men were suffering. It was to be ■ great in-

Christ Crucified

heritage of which the gift of the Spirit was the Gal. iii.
earnest and foretaste. 13, 14.

So said Peter in Acts iii. 25, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." Compare Gen. xii. 3 and xxii. 18.

XII

THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM SECURED IN CHRIST

GAL. iii. 15-20

15. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men ; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet if *it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

16. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many ; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

17. And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

18. For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise : but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

19. Wherefore then *serveth* the law ? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made ; and *it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20. Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one, but God is one.

Gal. iii.
15-20.
The
Covenant
made.

PAUL now takes an illustration which we can all appreciate : " Brethren, I speak after the manner of men : when an ordinary man's covenant has been confirmed, ratified, or made valid, no one setteth it aside or invalidates it ; moreover, no one introduces

The Promise to Abraham

new conditions into it." Apply this to the case in Gal. iii. point. To Abraham and his seed were the promises ^{15-20.} uttered. He saith not "and to seeds," as of many, but as of one "and to thy seed," which is Christ. Paul here draws attention to the exact term used in Gen. xvii. 8. The Hebrew word translated seed, here and elsewhere, may apply either to an individual or to a family. The plural form of it is only used for seeds, *i.e.* for kinds of seed (barley, oats, etc.).

The promises to Abraham and his seed included ^{The Grant to Abraham.} not only the possession of the land of Canaan (Gen. xiii. 15; xvii. 8; xxiv. 7) but also the blessing for the Gentiles (Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18), and it is the last of these passages to which Paul now calls attention. It is as if God said, "In one of thine offspring a blessing shall come upon all nations." We are here taken back in thought to the primæval promise of victory over evil granted to the seed of the woman in Gen. iii. 15, which was to be fulfilled in due time. "Now," he says, "the covenant made valid beforehand by God unto Christ, the law, which was 430 years after, doth not invalidate, that it should disannul the promise." This is the very point of the illustration. The original terms of the covenant are binding and unalterable. God had sworn by Himself in the matter (Gen. xvii. 15; compare Heb. vi. 13, 14). The covenant was of

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. iii.
15-20.

the nature of a charter or grant, applicable to all the offspring of faithful Abraham, but made effectual through the intervention of One, that is, Christ.

If the inheritance which included the blessing was of, or because of, the law, *i.e.* if it was the result of keeping the law of Moses, then it was no more of promise ; “but God freely gave it to Abraham by promise.” It was given unconditionally, and the law, which was hundreds of years after, could not alter the freeness of the gift.

**The Position
of the Law.** Those of Paul’s Jewish readers who had at tentively followed him up to this point would be eager to interrupt, and ask the question which he proceeds to deal with. What, then, is the position of the law¹ of Moses ? It could not have been introduced to alter the terms of the patriarchal covenant or to open a new way to the attainment of a blessing for all nations. “It was an additional covenant, a parenthesis in the divine order, introduced because of transgression, *i.e.* as a hedge round the people to keep them from transgressions, until the Seed should come to Whom the promise was made. It was ordered or instituted through angels, as Stephen had said (Acts vii. 53), and through the agency of a mediator, that is to say, Moses, who went to and fro between the Lord

¹ See Part II., IV., “Christ and the Law.”

The Promise to Abraham

and Israel. (Compare Deut. v. 5, where Moses says, Gal. iii. "I stood between the Lord and you at that time.") **I5-20.**

"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one."

Mediation involves two parties who have to agree to certain terms. "But God is one." His covenant with Abraham was of the nature of a free promise: there were no terms to be arranged, and consequently no mediator was needed between Abraham and God. The mediation of Christ, which is referred to in the New Testament, has to do with a different department of the divine order, not with the original covenant or promise made with Abraham, nor with the covenant made on Mount Sinai, but with the new covenant which was ratified or made valid by the bloodshedding of Christ. (Compare Jer. xxxi. 31 Matt. xxvi. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 5; Heb. viii. 6.)

As a matter of fact not even the temporal blessings connected with the settlement of Israel in Canaan were won by the righteousness of the law. Moses plainly reminds the people of this when he says, "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that He may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." In other words, God's blessing descended on Israel not because of their obedience to the law of Moses but

*Israel's
Blessings
were of
Grace.*

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. iii.
15-20. because of the free and gracious promise which He had granted to the patriarchs.

In this section we are really getting a fresh insight into the faithfulness of God, and into the certainty that what He has promised that He will perform. Let us ever look up to Him as the faithful Promiser.

XIII

THE LAW AND THE PROMISE OF SONSHIP

GAL. iii. 21-29

21. *Is the law then against the promises of God ? God forbid : for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*

22. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

“Is the law then opposed to the promises of God ?” Gal. iii.
By no means. It was introduced hundreds of 21-29.
years later by divine authority, neither to supersede

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. iii.
21-29.

The Promise
to the
Believer.

the promise which was of grace, nor to be set up in opposition to it. "If indeed a law had been given which could make alive or keep alive, then righteousness would have been of law." That has already been shown to be impossible. Life must come first, and obedience afterwards. Legislation is serviceable, but it cannot quicken our dormant nature. "But scripture shut up all, literally everything, under sin, that the promise proceeding from faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe, *i.e.* that believe the promise, or rather, that believe Him that makes it."

This may well be illustrated from John xi. 25, etc., where the Lord says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." Then He asks, "Believest thou this?" Martha replies, "Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ." She took Him at His word, without professing to understand the full meaning of what He promised. Those who believe Christ get the blessing, as Abraham believed God and in his seed got the inheritance.

The Law
and the
Prospect.

"For before the Faith came we Jews were under the watchful guardianship of law, shut up together against the time when the Faith should be disclosed." Just as we now look forward to the

The Law and the Promise of Sonship

revelation of the glory, so the Jew under the law Gal. iii. looked forward to the revelation of the Faith. In 21-29. a very wide sense he looked for redemption (Luke i. 68; ii. 38). Then would come the New Covenant, which would include true heart-service, thorough devotion, better knowledge of God, and an effectual way of pardon (Jer. xxxi. 31, etc.).

Thus "the law of Moses has become a child-leader for us, to guide us to Christ, that we might be justified in consequence of faith." Paul is here taking a large view of the question, and observes how the Mosaic dispensation led up to something better which God had intended all along.

"But inasmuch as the Faith has come we are Privilege of no longer under child-leaders; for all of you are Sonship. Children of God through faith in Christ Jesus." So says St John, "As many as received Christ to them gave He the privileged position of becoming children of God, even to them that believe on His Name, who were born not of blood (*i.e.* by descent), nor of the will of the flesh (*i.e.* by effort), nor of the will of man (*i.e.* by the determination of others), but of God" (John i. 12, 13).

"Born of God," "children of God!" How easily these words slip from our lips, but how profound is their meaning! Think what they stand for. God, the Creator of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. The Lord of Hosts

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. iii. 21-29. is His name. He dwelleth in the high and holy place and inhabiteth Eternity. Yet though so high and so far beyond our comprehension, He humbleth Himself to behold what is going on in this little corner of His universe and to take an interest in every member of the human race. Adam was in a sense His son, made in His likeness ; Abraham was His friend ; Israel was His son, even His first-born ; the Lord Jesus was His Son in a far nearer and dearer degree when He took the manhood into the Godhead ; and those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus are God's sons and daughters in a new and precious sense. They receive new life ; they exercise it ; they are conformed to the divine will ; they bring forth the fruit of the Spirit ; they have before them the hope of everlasting life. Such is the condition of those who in deed and truth are born of God.

Divine Con-descension. Putting on Christ. “For whoever of you were baptised into Christ did sacramentally put on Christ, both as your spiritual clothing and as your spiritual armour.” This putting on, which was formally set forth at your baptism, has to be carried out daily in life. “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,” says Paul to the baptised Romans (Rom. xiii. 14 ; compare Eph. iv. 23, 24, and Col. iii. 10).

He has struck home in this section, and adds in a tone of triumph, “There, in Christ, is no

The Law and the Promise of Sonship

question of Jew or Greek, of slave or free, of male Gal. iii. or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.¹ 21-29. But if ye belong to Christ and are in Him, then ye are indeed Abraham's seed, for Christ is his seed (see verse 16), and ye are inheritors according to promise," *i.e.* the promise which God freely made to Abraham.

¹ See Part II., V., "The Position of the Jew under the New Covenant."

XIV

EMANCIPATION AND ADOPTION

GAL. iv. 1-7

1. Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all ;
2. But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.
3. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world :
4. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,
5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.
6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.
7. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son ; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Gal. iv.
I-7.

“BUT I say this : so long as the inheritor is an infant there is no difference between him and a bond-servant, though he is really master of all, but he is under governors (as regards his person) and stewards (as regards his substance) until the time appointed by his father. So it is with us : while we were ‘infants’ we were enslaved under the elements of the world.”

Emancipation and Adoption

It is noticeable that Paul here drifts out of Gal. iv. the argument against legalism into a reference to I-7. the results of legalism, namely worldliness. By Legalism and "the elements" we are to understand probably the Worldliness. letters of the alphabet, which were called by this title. It is as if he said, We were slaves and bond-servants to the A, B, C of the world. And what constitutes the A, B, C of the world? Shall we take an answer from St John's Epistle (1 John ii. 16)? "All that is in the world, *A*—the lust of the flesh, *B*—the desire of the eyes, *C*—the boastfulness in our substance (see Jas. iv. 16), is not from the Father but is from the world."

Against the spirit of worldliness legalism provides Legalism no sure remedy, and offers no effectual resistance. Ineffective. Why not? Because the mischief is not in the outside things, but in our hearts. Paul will show the remedy clearly in the fifth chapter; but even here it comes out. The legalist is overmastered by his own lower self. Our Lord had told His Jewish hearers the same thing (John viii. 34, 36), "He that committeth sin is the bond-servant to sin: if the Son shall emancipate you, ye shall be free indeed." This utterance implied that what the law could not do the Son was prepared to do. Legalism was opposed to sin, but it could not deliver from the thraldom of an evil heart.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. iv.
I-7.
Legalism
and
Bondage.

Legalism and bond-service had hitherto gone hand in hand. But it was not to be so always. The fulness of time came. As the Lord Himself said, "The time is fulfilled, and the Reign of God is at hand" (Mark i. 15). For reasons unknown to the world God had waited, but He was to wait no longer. "God sent forth His Son"—His own Son—His only Son. The Word was made flesh, He was "born of a woman," thus partaking of our nature and becoming Son of man as well as Son of God; "born under the law," as every Israelite was, with all the responsibilities and privileges which this involved. In this twofold capacity He was able to do something for the race, and something additional which was needed for the Jew. He came to bruise the serpent's head as Seed of the woman, and He came to deliver Israel from the bond-service which legalism had failed to break down. There was to be liberation for all, sonship or adoption for all. The day had come for the long-needed abolition of moral slavery; it was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

"Inasmuch as ye are thus constituted sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, Abba, Father." The mission of the Son into the world is followed by the mission of the Spirit into the heart. He takes of the things

The Mission
of the Son
and the
Mission of
the Spirit.

Emancipation and Adoption

of Christ and makes them real to our inner consciousness, breathing into us a conviction of God's fatherly love, and drawing out of us the filial response of recognition, loyalty, and devotion. "I will arise and go to my Father." It is to all intents and purposes "Paradise regained." Have we found it so?

"And so thou art no longer a bond-servant, enslaved to the A, B, C of the world, but a son, and if a son then an heir of God, having ■ share of the promised inheritance, not through the law, but through Christ, the true Seed of Abraham." Observe how Paul drops the plural number and speaks to the individual, to bring home the blessed truth of personal liberation from evil and of a personal share in the spiritual inheritance.

XV

A WARNING AND AN APPEAL

GAL. iv. 8-20

8. Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.
9. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage ?
10. Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.
11. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.
12. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I *am* ; for I *am* as ye *are* : ye have not injured me at all.
13. Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.
14. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected ; but received me as an angel of God, *even as* Christ Jesus.
15. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of ? for I bear you record, that, if *it had been* possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.
16. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth ?
17. They zealously affect you, *but not well* ; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.
18. But *it is* good to be zealously affected always in *a* good *thing*, and not only when I am present with you.
19. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,
20. I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice ; for I stand in doubt of you.

A Warning and an Appeal

THESE forcible sentences remind us that the Gal. iv. Christian Church as a whole, and the Galatian ^{8-20.} Churches in particular, consisted of a Jewish nucleus and a Gentile offshoot or graft. The Jewish element was strong, and influential, because Judaism had escaped many of the pollutions of heathenism. But the Gentile element probably formed the majority. It is to these that Paul now specially appeals, because they were in serious danger of relapse, not indeed into heathenism, but into something almost akin to it.

“But then when ye did not know God you were in bondage to those gods which in their nature were not gods. Now, however, that ye know God, or rather are known by God, how turn ye back again to those elements which neither have strength nor riches, to which again once more ye would be in bondage?” There is great moral force in the little word “how.” These people, the majority of them, had emerged from heathenism. We get a picture of their condition in the state of things at Lystra, which was one of the Galatian Churches (Acts xiv. 8-18). Here Paul had healed a lame man, and the natives thought that Paul and Barnabas must be gods who had come down in the likeness of men. They named Paul ~~Hermes~~ or Mercury, and Barnabas Zeus or Jupiter; and the priest of the temple and statue of Jupiter which

Subtle
Influence of
Materialism.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. iv.
8-20.

was outside or before their city prepared a sacrificial feast in their honour. But the missionaries, perceiving what was going on, leapt in among them and implored them to turn from these vain idols to the living God.

Peril of
Relapse.

Unless we are well acquainted with modern missions in Africa and the East it is hard for us to realise the bondage of heathenism and the terrorism exercised by an idolatrous priesthood. What did it mean, and what does it mean to such a down-trodden people when the gospel of the living God is preached by the Christian missionary and reaches the hearts of the hearers ? Light, liberty, knowledge of the one true God, peace through Jesus Christ, a spirit of love and of hope inspiring the inner life and affecting the outer. This is conversion, the true turning-point in life. How then is it conceivable that any one should be converted back again ! It is noteworthy that the same word is used of true conversion (Acts xiv. 15), and of this inglorious and debased conversion (Gal. iv. 9). How—by what arguments, by what trickery, by what subtlety—are you being re-converted, not indeed to the gross forms of heathenism, but to the A, B, C of a non-Christian system which is not strong enough to save you nor rich enough to reward you ?

“ Ye are beginning to observe (Jewish) days and months and seasons and years ”—things harmless in

A Warning and an Appeal

themselves, but part of a system which tends to Gal. iv.
strip you of true life and liberty in Christ. "I am 8-20.
afraid for you, lest in any degree I have laboured
and bestowed toil upon you in vain;" that is,
without producing a permanent result.

Paul writes strongly because he feels strongly. *The Danger
to the
Galatians—
and to
Ourselves.*
A glorious message had been committed to him. He had told it out to these Galatians. Many of them had broken away from heathenism and some from Judaism. But there were many enemies. The world, the flesh, and the devil constituted strong, sleepless forces against which the Christian soldier had—and has—to fight. Redemption is ours, adoption is ours, if we have cast in our lot with Christ, Whose service is perfect freedom; but if once we are beset by the thought that our acceptance by God does not wholly depend on His grace in Christ crucified, and that observances, Jewish or non-Jewish, are essential conditions to salvation, we are forsaking the narrow way and letting the adversary get within our guard. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts well, if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Most earnestly does St Paul continue his appeal and show his affection. "Brethren, I beseech

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Gal. iv. 8-20. you, be—become ye—as I am, for even I am as you are. Ye have done me no personal injury —ye know that I was in a condition of fleshly weakness when I preached the gospel to you on a former occasion.” (This may have been on his return journey (Acts xiv. 21), or on the later journey of Acts xv. 41.) “And my fleshly trial roused neither your despite nor your repulsion, but you received me as you would have received an angel of God, or Christ Jesus Himself. What has become of your kindly reception? For I testify of you that if it had been possible you would have dug out your own eyes and given them to me. Am I then become your enemy, in that I have dealt truly with you? They court you zealously with no fair motive; nay, they wish to exclude you, or to exclude us from you, that you may zealously court them.” Who are the “they”? Paul evidently refers to the Judaic teachers, who regarded Christianity only as the teaching of a special Jewish sect. “But it is fair to be zealous in a fair cause at every time, and not only when I am present with you, my children, for whom I travail afresh until Christ be formed in you. But I could wish to be present with you now and to change my voice, for I am perplexed about you.”

Note in passing the remarkable words, “until

A Warning and an Appeal

Christ be formed in you." We read in i. 16 of Gal. iv. Christ within, and here of the Formation of Christ ^{8-20.} within. The one reaches the understanding, the other permeates the convictions; both affect the conduct and the character. Can we honestly say that Christ is formed in us? Let us at least re-echo the old prayer: "Create in me a new heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

XVI

LESSONS FROM THE HISTORY OF SARAH AND HAGAR

GAL. iv. 21-31

21. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?
22. For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.
23. But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise.
24. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.
25. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.
26. But Jerusalem which *is above* is free, which is the mother of us all.
27. For it is written, Rejoice, *thou* barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.
28. Now we, brethren, as Isaac *was*, are the children of promise.
29. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now.
30. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.
31. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

The History of Sarah and Hagar

PAUL proceeds to fortify his appeal by an allegorical interpretation of a portion of the patriarchal history.^{21-31.}

"Tell me, ye that would be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written [in Genesis, which was sometimes regarded as part of the law] that Abraham had two sons—one from the bondmaid, and one from the freewoman, but he who was from the bondmaid was born according to the flesh, whilst he who was from the free-woman was through the promise. Now these things may be allegorised, for they are (or represent) the two covenants, the one from Mount Sinai, which tendeth or beareth to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is (or represents) Mount Sinai in Arabia, and she answereth to Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with her children."

This allegorical interpretation¹ of Hagar would be quite unlooked for among Jewish teachers. It would never occur to them that Hagar could represent Jerusalem, and they would repel the insinuation that the children of Jerusalem were in bondage. When the Lord Jesus told them that He was prepared to set them free they had answered, "We are Abraham's seed, and

*The
Bondslave.*

¹ See Part II., VIII., "The Allegorical Interpretation of Scripture."

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Gal. iv.
21-31.

we have never been in bondage to anyone." They were bond-slaves without knowing it. Judaism had become legalism, and so had become a system of bondage. Where, then, was spiritual emancipation to be found? "Jerusalem which is above is free, and is the mother of us all"—if we are Christians. The child of promise was the seed of Sarah, not of Hagar. The Seed was Christ; and those who are one with Christ, form the heavenly city of the saints. Accordingly it is written (Isa. liv. 1)—

"Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not,
Break forth and cry, thou that travailest not,
For the children of the desolate are many more
Than of her which hath the husband."

The
Outcast.

So far the points in the allegory are (i.) the contrast between fleshly birth and spiritual birth, (ii.) the contrast between slavery and freedom, (iii.) the contrast between the centre of the Judaic commonwealth and that of the Christian commonwealth, (iv.) the fact that the Christian Community, though later in time than the Jewish, should exceed in numbers. Two more points have to be brought out: (v.) as he that was born or begotten according to the flesh persecuted him that was born or begotten according to the spirit, so it is now. The Galatians knew that all too well. Paul had already taught them (Acts xiv. 22) that through

The History of Sarah and Hagar

much tribulation they must enter into the kingdom Gal. iv. of God ; and lastly, (vi.) in addition, “ Nevertheless 21-31. what saith the Scripture ? Cast out the bond-slave and her son, for the son of the bond-slave shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman.” The legalist is disinherited.

“ So then, brethren,” he continues, “ we are The Children not children of the legal covenant, in which of the Promise. so much depends on ritual conformity, but of the Abrahamic, unconditional covenant of grace, which is strictly a promise in Christ, and which, though fulfilled later in history, was rich and effectual and far-reaching in results.” In spite of the persecution which the natural would inflict on the supernatural, the former would be outcast, the latter would be blessed with the inheritance. That, says Paul, is our position. In a word, it is Liberty. Let us take this precious word again to our hearts.

XVII

CAUTIONS AGAINST A RE-ACTIONARY SPIRIT

GAL. v. 1-12

1. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.
2. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.
3. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.
4. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law ; ye are fallen from grace.
5. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.
6. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision ; but faith which worketh by love.
7. Ye did run well ; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth ?
8. This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you.
9. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.
10. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded : but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.
11. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution ? then is the offence of the cross ceased.
12. I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

Gal. v. "STAND fast therefore in the liberty wherewith
I-12. Christ hath set us free. It is He that hath
No liberated us, and it is our business to stand, and
Compromise.

Cautions against a Reactionary Spirit

not let ourselves be dragged again under the yoke Gal. v. of bondage. Behold, I, Paul, say to you that if ye be circumcised, *i.e.* if ye accept circumcision as a necessary condition of Christianity, Christ will be of no avail to you. I testify again to every man that is circumcised (as an essential rite) that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Whoever among you is seeking justification in the law is cut off from Christ and fallen away from grace. For we who are Christians and who are under the influence of the Spirit await the hope of the righteousness which cometh by Faith." What a contrast! The legalist practically cuts himself off from the grace which is in Christ Jesus; the loyal and simple believer walks in hope.

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is of ^{The Real Question.} any contributory force nor uncircumcision, but faith, which operateth through love." The question before God is not, Have you been circumcised? but, Do you believe, and is your faith a working one, and is love its characteristic fruit?

We have to notice here how Paul opens out a ^{Faith and Love.} new branch of his subject. Hitherto it has been all about faith in Christ crucified as a ground of justification. But the question naturally rises, What kind of faith is justifying faith? Is it enough merely to say, "I believe," or to utter the formula "Lord, Lord"? Certainly not. The faith

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. v.
I-12.

which leads you to rest on Christ for justification in the sight of God is very much alive. It is the beginning of a new and never-ending life; as the Lord said, "He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life." The marked feature of this life is love. Love begets love. The love of God penetrates our nature, breaks down our prejudice, melts our hard heart, awakens in us a spirit of devotion to God, and an earnest desire to be Christlike, and this leads to a spirit of tenderness towards others. Thus love is the fruit and consequently the test of life. So says St John again and again in his First Epistle.

Personal Argument.

Before developing this important subject Paul breaks forth again: "Ye were running well—who has thrown an obstacle in your way to hinder you from obeying the truth? This inducement (to Judaise) does not come from Him who called you. (Compare chap. i. 6.) A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." The mischief may be small at first; it may look quite innocent; those who object to it may seem bigoted and narrow-minded; still it is leaven, and it will work in the individual, and in the community, until the whole fabric of Christianity is undermined by it (compare 1 Cor. v. 6).

—And a Rebuke.

"Still I myself have confidence in the Lord with respect to you, that ye will be none otherwise minded; but he that disturbeth you shall bear his

Cautions against a Reactionary Spirit

own judgment, whoever he be. Besides, to regard Gal. v.
the matter from another point of view, if I am I-12.
still preaching the necessity of circumcision, how is
it that I continue to be persecuted, for in such a
case the stumbling-block of the cross is done away
with?" Perhaps some one had suggested that after
all Paul was a circumcised Jew, and had no
objection to circumcision in itself as an accompani-
ment to the Gospel. But, says Paul, this would
do away with the ground of Jewish complaint
against me and against my doctrine of Christ
crucified, which would soon shrink into nothingness.

Paul does not condescend to argue out this
point, but ends the matter with a sharp utterance :
"I would that they were even cut off that stir you
up to rebel against me." They ought to be, and
they shall be.

XVIII

LIBERTY AND LOVE

GAL. v. 13-15

13. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty ; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this ; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

Gal. v.
13-15.
Christian
Liberty.

"BUT Christian liberty must not be misunderstood. You, brethren, have been called unto liberty ; only use not liberty for an occasion of the flesh." Liberty does not mean doing just what you like. It does not mean throwing aside the laws of God and man. It does not mean yielding to the lusts of the flesh. As St Peter says (1 Pet. ii. 16), we are free, but we must not use our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness, *i.e.* a shelter for vice, but as the bond-servants of God. We have to honour all men, to love the Christian brotherhood, to give God the reverence due to Him, and to pay respect to the king.

Liberty and Love

"By love serve one another." If faith works by Gal. v. love, love makes mutual service a pleasure. It is I3-I5. in this way that God writes His law of love in our hearts. "The whole law is fulfilled in one sentence (Lev. xix. 18), Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Compare Rom. xiii. 7-10: "Render to everyone what is due . . . fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. You owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for he that loveth the other man hath fulfilled the law. For all the commandments, so far as our social relations are concerned, are summed up in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The Master had said the same thing, both in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii. 12) and in His answer to the lawyer (Matt. xxii. 39).

"Thy neighbour?—It is he whom thou
Hast power to aid and bless,
Whose aching heart or burning brow
Thy soothing hand may press,

Thy neighbour?—'tis the heart bereft
Of every earthly gem:
Widow and orphan helpless left,
Go thou and shelter them.

Where'er thou meet'st a human form
Less favoured than thine own,
Remember, 'tis thy neighbour worn,
Thy brother, or thy son."

Liberty and Service.

Epistle to the Galatians

**Gal. v.
13-15.**

But if, instead of cultivating the spirit of love, ye bite and devour one another, see to it that ye be not consumed one of another. He that takes the sword runs the risk of perishing by the sword. Perhaps Paul had some special reason for adding this caution, at anyrate he knew that a life of self-renouncing love is a life of liberty.

XIX

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

GAL. v. 16-21

16. *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh : and these are contrary the one to the other : so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these* ; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21. Envynings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like : of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherite the kingdom of God.

PAUL is now led to a very practical part of his Gal. v. subject : "Walk in the Spirit." The Christian 16-21. life is a walk. It consists of active exercise. Walking is very different from talking. When we walk we keep moving on. We are constructed to walk forward, not backward or sideways. We have an aim, or object, in our walk ; and we need strength for it. In all these ways walking is a natural and excellent illustration of the Christian The Spiritual Walk.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. v.
16-21.

course. Keep moving on in the right direction, under the guidance, influence, and inspiration of the Spirit. Make progress in holiness of thought, word, and deed ; advance in the realisation of the truth as it is in Jesus ; enter more and more into the spirit of adoption, regarding the most high God as your ever-present Father, and aiming at pleasing Him. Draw your vital force from Him who is both the real Vine and the Bread of life. In this sense, "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil or accomplish the lust of the flesh."¹ You will throw them off, you will not be brought under their dominion. You will say *No* to them with ever-increasing force. Thus Paul is led to supply a constant and sure remedy for our daily need.

"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are set over against one another as opposites, so that ye do not the things which ye would. But if ye are being led, guided, actuated, by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Evidently the Apostle's point is that the Christian is liberated from the yoke of legalism through the inspiring effect of life in Christ. Paul had been through it all himself. He had closed the door of his life to legalism as he opened it to Christ (chap. ii. 19).

¹ See Part II., VI., "The Flesh and the Spirit."

The Works of the Flesh

It is noticeable that Paul does not content himself with generalities. He goes into particulars with sufficient fulness to make us realise the greatness of the conflict which the Christian has to face. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest —there is no mistake about them—they are these: *adultery, fornication, impurity, lasciviousness.*" These are the four sins against personal and sexual purity, and include breaches of the marriage law and departures from the reverent relationship which ought to exist between man and woman. They cover not only acts and words, but those thoughts, desires, and imaginations which border on what is shameful and unbecoming, and which are antagonistic and harassing to spiritual life. "Abstain from fleshly lusts," says St Peter (1 Peter ii. 11), "for they war against the soul," that is, against the true interests of your life.

Paul puts these things in the front because he knew how they sap spiritual vitality and stain the thoughts with evil. The Lord Jesus did the same thing when He gave the terrible list of things which proceed out of the heart (Mark vii. 21, etc.). The human heart is the spring of abominable thoughts and the harbour of vile suggestions. The prophet well compared it to a cage of unclean birds (Jer. v. 27). Manifestly we need a power higher than our own to deal with these plagues of our heart.

Gal. v.
16-21.

The Works
of the Flesh.

The Plague
of our Heart.

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Gal. v.
16-21.

" Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy Name, through Christ our Lord."

Idolatry.

Paul goes rapidly on. He is not giving a morbid analysis, but rather a bare outline, to make us see the depth of the pit from which Christ delivers His flock. Next he names *idolatry*, which opens the door to gross materialism, and is often painfully related to the previously named sins. We know this from the testimony of the mission-field.

Witchcraft.

After idolatry comes *witchcraft*, or sorcery. This is only named here and in Rev. ix. 21; xviii. 23; xxi. 8; xxii. 15. It is an appeal to the borderland in our nature, and is often linked with materialism, from which it is a reaction. In Rev. ix. 21 it stands between murder and fornication, and in Rev. xxi. 8 and xxii. 15, the three are again in the same company. The Greek word which stands here for witchcraft indicates the use of chemicals (pharmacy). Guided by its usage in the Old Testament, we see that it is applied to every kind of magic and divination whereby the naturally superstitious mind of man is enthralled. Many a missionary in Africa, the South Seas, and even India, can tell of the terrorism which this evil

The Works of the Flesh

thing works in the mind and on the beliefs. But Gal. v.
the Lord Jesus can break its bonds. 16-21.

There are phases of Spiritualism in the present day which bear a painful family likeness to ancient heathenish witchcraft, just as there are forms of materialism hardly distinguishable from idolatry. Our wisest course with respect to all the evils mentioned so far is flight (compare 1 Cor. vi. 18; x. 14; 1 Tim. vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 22). A Modern Peril.

But to Whom shall I flee? Who is the Refuge of Our Refuge. our souls? Is there any one ever-present and ever-ready to receive and welcome? There is One of Whom it is written (Heb. ii. 18): "For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace."

Paul now advances to a series of evil things Other Sins. which we are naturally inclined to look upon with less horror than those already mentioned. They are *enmities, contentions, emulations, passionate-ness, quarrelsomeness, dissensions, heresies*, i.e. the setting up of our own opinion against that of the community. Then we come to *envyings and jealousies*, followed by *murders*, which is the fully developed fruit of many of the preceding vices. The relationship between these can be illustrated by the case of Cain and of Joseph's brethren, and also by that of Ahab, and in the New Testament

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16-21.

by the death of John the Baptist and by the darkest deed of all, the crucifixion of the Lord. *Drunkenness* follows, together with low *revellings* of a class that go with it, and foster the development of the animal passions. Paul wisely refrains from adding to the list, but does not wish us to think it is complete, so he adds, "and such like."

Their
Punishment.

With regard to all these works of the flesh he speaks with no uncertain sound: "I tell you beforehand, as I have foretold you already, that those who are practising such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." These works of the flesh, if unchecked, manifestly lead us *from* God, not *to* Him. They are in direct opposition to His will. They are so many proofs that we are not under His dominion in any real sense, even though we say, "Lord, Lord." In the last day the King will say of such, "Depart from Me, I never knew you."

"Lord, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."

XX

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

GAL. v. 22-26

22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
23. Meekness, temperance : against such there is no law.
24. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
26. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

PAUL turns gladly to the other side, away from the Gal. v. 22-26. unfruitful works of darkness to the fruit of the True Vine, which is Christ. He sets forth nine attributes of the Christlike life, all the fruit of the Eternal Spirit, all capable of being exercised in everyday life by all classes of society and in every nation under heaven. They are by no means a complete list, but are characteristic of the children of the kingdom. There is no such list in the Old Testament. They were not taught by the Pharisees. Are we exercising them ; are we aiming at them ? If not, though we have a name to live, we are dead. Let us look at the list and pray over them, one by one.

Marks of the Christ-like Life.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. v.
22-26.
Loving-
Kindness.

I. *Loving-kindness.* This is the Queen of Excel-lences. This sent the Lord Jesus, the only Son of God, into the world. This showed itself in His dealings with the children of men during His brief ministry. This shone from the Cross. Behold how He loved. Is His Spirit in us? Have we in any degree this mind which was in Christ Jesus? Do we look not only at our own interests but also on the interests of others? Are we sympathetic, thoughtful, considerate, self-sacrificing?

"Love is the source of breath and life,
The very fount of bliss ;
The light that fills the world above,
And sweetly shines on this.
Love is the gentle air of heaven,
Enjoyed by angels there,
And wafted from that beauteous land
To soothe the sons of care."

"O God, Who hast taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth, send Thy Holy Spirit and breathe into our hearts that most excellent gift, so that we drinking in Thy love towards us may exercise Christlike love towards others."

Joyfulness.

II. *Joyfulness.* This follows in the train of love. It is not boisterous merry-making. It is joy in the Lord, deep-seated, thrilling the soul, bringing sunshine into the inner life, and showing itself in the outer life. The truly joyful man is incapable of hard or harsh dealings with others, and this joy

The Fruit of the Spirit

finds no place in a heart which devises evil against Gal. v. the neighbour. It is akin to "the joy of the Lord" —that joy of which He spoke in Matt. xxv. 22-26. 21, 23, as the prospect of the faithful servant, and of which He spoke in Luke xv. 7, 10, as the bliss of the angels over one sinner that repenteth, and of which He spoke again in John xv. 11, as to be fulfilled in His faithful followers. It is holy, it is heavenly, it is hopeful, and it leaves no space for gloom, morbidness, or despair. Have I a share of this blessed fruit; do I feel it; do I show it; or am I gloomy, morbid, melancholy?

O God, in Thy presence is fulness of joy. Turn my mourning into joy, restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and may the joy of the Lord be my strength.

III. *Peaceableness.* This is more than peaceful-
ness, but springs from it. The Lord Jesus says,
"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto
you; not as the world giveth give I unto you." Peaceable-
ness.
The troubled soul which flees to Jesus finds itself
at rest in Him. The peace of God which surpasseth
all human understanding becomes a guard to his
heart amidst the troubles and disappointments of
life, but that gift will show itself in his dealings
with others. The nervous irritations to which
we seem peculiarly liable in the present age will
give way to calmness, though not to inertia or

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Gal. v.
22-26.

indifference. "Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another." So said the Master, and in accordance with this word He lived and acted. And we must do so too, and that in every department of life, social, political, ecclesiastical ; as far as possible living peaceably with all men, seeking peace and pursuing it, for, "Happy are the Peacemakers."

O God of peace, let Thy peace rule my heart, that if it be possible I may live peaceably with all men. Fill me with all joy and peace in believing. Enable me day by day to go forth into the battlefield of Christ with my feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.

IV. *Long-suffering*, that is, slowness to anger. This is one of the notable attributes of God recorded in Exod. xxxiv. 6, and repeated in Num. xiv. 18 and Ps. lxxxvi. 15. How constantly it was called for in the history of Israel, and again during our Lord's short ministry, and how often He had to bear and forbear, not only in His dealings with the people generally and with His critics, but also with His immediate followers! Who is there among us who is not in danger of being quick-tempered, of answering sharply if not bitterly when we ought to be patient? "Love suffereth long and is kind." Paul carried on his ministry amid terrible opposition, but he appeals to the fact that he did it in a spirit of long-suffering and kindness (2 Cor. vi. 6).

Long-
Suffering.

The Fruit of the Spirit

He couples long-suffering with forbearance in Gal. v. 22-26.
Eph. iv. 2, and with meekness in Col. iii. 12.

O Thou Who art long-suffering in Thine eternal nature, and Who hast been wonderfully long-suffering towards me, enable me by Thy Spirit to be long-suffering towards others, and to be slow to anger in my dealings with those whose conduct rouses my wrath. Enable me in this matter to walk in the steps of my Master.

V. Kindness. This is coupled with long-suffering in some of the passages just quoted. The English word "gentleness" partly covers the meaning, but it hardly goes far enough, as the Greek word marks the kindly disposition which will show itself in active service. In Luke vi. 35 the Lord tells us that God is kind to the ungracious, and St Paul says that the divine kindness is intended to draw us to repentance (Rom. ii. 4), and that it must not be despised. In Titus iii. 4 it is associated with the divine "philanthropy." It is a social virtue, whereby we can ameliorate many of the troubles which we see around us.

"Dig channels for the streams of love,
Where they may broadly run ;
And love has overflowing streams,
To fill them every one.
For we must share if we would keep
That good thing from above,
Ceasing to give, we cease to have ;
Such is the law of love."

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22-26.

O God, Who shewest Thine eternal attributes most specially in Thy kindness to us in Christ Jesus, grant to me the Spirit of kindness in my dealings with others, that I may think kindly, speak kindly, and act kindly.

Goodness.

VI. *Goodness.* How can we distinguish between kindness and goodness? In the great and notable passage on the attributes of God already referred to (Exod. xxxiv. 6) God is revealed as abounding in goodness and in truth or faithfulness. Goodness is essential to His nature. It seems to go deeper down than kindness, and to be akin to love. It is opposed to everything which is evil or immoral; and it shows no weak compliance with what is called indiscriminate charity, for it is tempered with wisdom as well as with righteousness.

O Thou, the Eternal Good, breathe into me increasingly the love of Thy Name. Nourish me with all goodness, that I may hate what is evil and ever follow after that which is good. Guard me, lest my good be evil spoken of through any foolishness on my part. Give me a right judgment in all things, and stir me up to increased thoughtfulness and consideration in dealing with the fallen and the outcast.

Faithfulness.

VII. *Faithfulness.* God, Who abounds in goodness, abounds also in faithfulness (Exod. xxxiv. 6). Christ promises the reward to the servant who is

The Fruit of the Spirit

both good and faithful (Matt. xxv. 22, 23). He Gal. v. Himself is the true and faithful One (Rev. iii. 7, 14). ^{22-26.} If it were not so His promises would be of none effect. The conviction of God's truth is the cause of our belief in Him. There would be no stability in nature or in grace without it. Faith is the realisation that God is true. This can be illustrated from the case of Abraham. But if we have laid hold of the faithfulness of God in Christ, then we too have to be faithful and true to others, and that at all costs, even though it be to our own hurt. This implies not only speaking the truth but doing the truth, and setting our mind on what is true. It is opposed to everything which is false. Putting away lying, speak truth. It includes honesty, commercial and political, and leaves no loophole for fraud and trickery or debt, or for such a foolish use of money as is implied in gambling, betting, and extravagance.

O God of Truth, breathe into me the spirit of faithfulness, steadfastness, truthfulness, openness, and honesty. Keep me from every temptation to be unfair or unjust in my intercourse with others. Thou being my helper, I will pay my debts, and never keep others waiting for money which is really theirs and not mine.

VIII. *Meekness.* Who shall attempt to define Meekness, what meekness is? It is the spirit of Him Who,

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Gal. v.
22-26.

when He was reviled, reviled not again ; when He suffered, He threatened not. Meekness makes it possible to turn the cheek to the smiter. It is not cowardice, for it demands high courage. It makes one willing to take a lower place than one deserves, to be silent about one's merits, and to bear slights, insults, and false accusation "for the Son of man's sake." Blessed are the meek. They get more than they lose. Instead of calling down fire from heaven upon the Lord's adversaries, they cultivate the spirit of their Master. They learn from Him Who is meek and lowly in spirit, and Whose meekness and gentleness were appealed to by one who never knew Him in the flesh (2 Cor. x. 1). "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not" (Jer. xlvi. 5). Rather seek the Lord and His righteousness, and leave other things in His hands.

Lord, how often have I failed to exercise the spirit of meekness! How often I have resented the neglect of others; how seldom have I put up with slights in a Christ-like spirit; how unwilling I have been to suffer undeserved punishment! Work in me by Thy Spirit, that I may be willing to press the claims of others and to bear the burdens of others, and so to walk in the steps of Him who suffered, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us near to Thee.

Self-control.

IX. *Self-control.* The nine virtues are like a

The Fruit of the Spirit

necklace of precious gems, and the first and last are Gal. v. the clasps, love for others and mastery of self. The 22-26. higher self is to be inspired to conquer the lower self, looking up to God in every time of stress, and saying, "Father, not my will, but Thine be done." If anything needs the inspiration of Christ's Spirit it is this. God's law was in the heart of the Lord Jesus, and we need to have it written in our heart, that we may willingly and ungrudgingly turn our back to every inducement to live a lower, easier life, however respectable it may be, and that we may yield heart and hand and all to our Saviour and in Him to God.

Thy will be done, O Lord, in me and through me. Inspire me, that I may know it, see it, love it, do it. Conform my mind to Thine. Purge out of me everything that makes it hard to yield. Be my strength, that I may bring every thought into captivity to Christ, that I may cast away every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset.

Surveying the list which he has written down, A Survey Paul adds with a touch of triumph, "Against such and a Reminder. there is *no law*." He cannot get the word "law" out of his mind. Neither God nor man, however, can forbid the exercise of these excellences, nor do they call forth the spirit of legalism. If they were acted upon, earth would be a little heaven below.

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Gal. v.
22-26.

There would be no room for the works of the flesh. What tree can bring forth such blessed fruit? Can we be grafted into such a tree? can the virtue of such a tree permeate our nature and penetrate our lives? The answer is to be found in Christ. Abide in Him, and you become fruit-bearing.

No
Compromise
possible.

Paul adds two short sentences to drive his teaching further home. "Those that belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." They are not their own. They realise and acknowledge that they have been bought with a price, consequently they have to nail their flesh, which is here regarded as ■ centre of animal passion, to Christ's cross. So Paul had said earlier in the letter, giving himself as an example, "I am crucified with Christ" (chap. ii. 20). There is no room for compromise here. No man can serve two masters. This was settled when we yielded to Him, and it was signed and sealed when we were baptised. If our vicious habits are thus decisively crucified, how can we live any longer therein? Christ crucified is our foundation and our resting-place. He also gives a particular form to our lives. The fact that most of us received baptism before we could understand what it meant does not remove our privilege or our responsibility; but it calls us to a joyful decision as soon as we see what the crucifixion of the Lord really means to us, and what it claims from

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us. We have received the token that Christ is on Gal. v. our side and that we are to be on His, we are to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and in His strength we are manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue His soldiers and servants unto our life's end.

Am I doing this ; am I a loyal soldier ; an out-and-out Christian ? Am I consciously, deliberately, rejoicingly one of those who belong to Christ—a sheep of the Good Shepherd ?

He adds yet one more sentence : “ If we live under the influence of the Spirit, let us take each step under the influence of the Spirit.” The use of a special Greek word shows that the Apostle is not here speaking of the walk in general but of each step in particular. Life is measured up into years, months, weeks, days. Each day is like a walk, and is made up of many steps. How many steps do we take in our daily round and common task ? Many of them we call routine. Perhaps this is a mistake. At any rate, every conscious and deliberate act in our day may be done rightly or wrongly. We may say Yes or No to our conscience, which is the voice of God, and which is directed, or ought to be, by His word and stimulated by His Spirit. We need inspiration in little things. Everything may be prayed over, that it may contribute to the great result. “ Herein is My Father glorified,

Be Christ-like in Little Things.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. v. 22-26. that ye bear much fruit ; so shall ye be My disciples ”
(John xv. 8).

“ How blessed, from the bonds of sin
And earthly fetters free,
In singleness of heart and aim,
Thy servant, Lord, to be !

With willing heart and longing eyes,
To watch before Thy gate,
Ready to run the weary race,
To bear the heavy weight ;

No voice of thunder to expect,
But follow calm and still,
For love can easily divine
The One Beloved’s will.”

“ I beseech Thee, O Lord, that I may this day
be directed, strengthened, cheered by Thy blessed
Spirit, and become fruitful in every good work.
Enable me to be loving and unselfish, joyful, and
bringing joy to others, peaceful and peaceable,
long-suffering, kind and good, faithful and just,
meek and gentle, temperate and self-controlled in
all things ; and all the glory shall be to Thee.”

XXI

LESSONS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS FOR WORKERS

GAL. vi. 1-6

1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness ; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

2. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

3. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

4. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

5. For every man shall bear his own burden.

6. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

PAUL proceeds to illustrate the great law of Gal. vi. spiritual life which he has been laying down, by I-6. various samples of practical Christianity.

The 26th verse of the previous chapter may be regarded as a turning point in the Epistle. We have to remind ourselves that St Paul is not answerable for the division into chapters, and that they sometimes break the current of thought. He is speaking, not at random, but under the influence of a spirit higher than his own when he says, "Let us not

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. vi.
1-6.

become vainglorious (compare Phil. ii. 3), provoking or inciting one another to false emulation, envying one another." Love is not puffed up, does not envy, does not act unbecomingly, is not easily provoked. Rather, it suffereth long and is kind (1 Cor. xiii.)

Restore the
Trans-
gressor.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in any transgression, ye that are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering *thyself*, lest thou, even thou, be tempted." Note here the change of number. The exhortation begins in the plural but ends in the singular, thus becoming specially personal. How often we are overtaken in a transgression! Suddenly a temptation comes, and we step over the bounds and out of the narrow path of the Christlike life. We have done wrong, and perhaps our wrong-doing is not only a secret matter between us and God, though that is most common, but is also known to certain other members of the Christian community.

What is to be done in such a case, and by whom? The spiritual, those who live and walk in the Spirit, have a charge hereby laid upon them to deal with the case. Their business is to restore such an one, to make things straight with him, to help him up. The word translated "restore" is used of "mending" nets which had been broken (Matt. iv. 21), anything of the nature of an open

Lessons and Encouragements

sin involves a breach both between the sinner and Gal. vi. God, and between the sinner and the Community. I-6. Paul is not here laying down rules of Church discipline, but rather the aim and spirit of those who are called upon, whether formally or informally, to deal with the case. Their aim is not to widen the breach, but to heal it; and this healing process is not to be effected by harsh or bitter treatment, but in a spirit of meekness—that meekness which had just been spoken of as the fruit of the Spirit (chap. v. 23). In order to show more clearly what was in his mind, Paul adds the important words, “considering or looking to thyself, lest thou also who art spiritual be tempted.” How often are we driven to think of the Apostle’s words in 1 Cor. x. 12, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall!” Who is immune from temptation? Where is the sinless one? Who can throw the first stone? We need to humble ourselves before we undertake the reformation of the erring.

“Deal gently with the erring,
Ye know not of the power
With which the dark temptation came,
In some unguarded hour.

Ye may not know how earnestly
He struggled or how well,
Until the hour of darkness came,
And sadly thus he fell.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. vi.
1-6.

Heir of the selfsame heritage,
Child of the self-same God,
He hath but stumbled in the path
Thou hast in weakness trod."

Help the
Weak.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." The law of Christ? Then are we after all under the law? Yes, we are under Christ. St Paul reminded the Corinthians in 1 Cor. ix. 21, "being not without-law to God, but under-law to Christ." We pray that we may run in the way of God's commandments; they are not grievous (1 John v. 3). Christ's yoke is easy, *i.e.* kindly, and His burden is light; but we are called to put our neck under His yoke and to take His burden. We have done with legalism as a means of justification, and we have entered into life, that henceforth we should not serve sin, but that we should serve Christ. Legalism has given way to loyalty. The Christian is a burden-bearer, but he does not bear what Christ bore for him; rather he shares Christ's sympathetic interest in others. What then is the law of Christ which the Apostle has specially in his mind, and which we fulfil when we bear one another's burdens? Can there be any doubt or hesitation in answering? It is not the law propounded in Lev. xix. 18, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This is the summary of the law of Moses, and is appealed to as such by the

Lessons and Encouragements

Lord and His Apostles (Matt. xix. 19; xxii. 39; Gal. vi. I-6.
Rom. xiii. 9; James ii. 8).

But Christ gave His followers a new commandment, which is by no means the same as the royal law just quoted. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John xiii. 34). Again, "This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John xv. 12). It is to this that St John referred (1 John iii. 23) when he taught "that we should love one another, as He gave us commandment." Two things are to be noticed about it. First, that the precept deals with love between Christian and Christian as such, and secondly, that it prescribes the measure and standard of that love, namely, the self-sacrificing love of Christ. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend."

Paul knew the law of Christ, though he had not been present in the upper room when it was originally propounded. It settled a great many questions in Paul's own life, and we have to set it before us as our ideal. Thus in the question before us, the question of burden-bearing, we are inclined to ask ourselves, How far must I go? We look to Christ as our living Law and Example in the matter; we look to the

The Law of
Christ.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. vi.
I-6.

Spirit as our spring of vital strength ; and we seek the wisdom which cometh from above, both to direct our actions and also to give us a sense of proportion in dealing with the demands which daily come before us.

“ I am the Way, the Truth, the Life.
Without the Way there is no going ;
Without the Truth there is no knowing ;
Without the Life there is no living.

The heart grows rich in giving ;
All its wealth is living grain ;
Seeds which mildew in the garner,
Scattered fill with gold the plain.

Is thy burden hard and heavy ?
Do thy steps drag wearily ?
Help to bear thy brother’s burden ;
God will bear both it and thee.”

Risk of Self-deception. “ If anyone thinks he is anything when he is nothing, he deceives himself.” There is plenty of this self-deception in every one of us. We have a false idea of ourselves, and others may have a mistaken estimate of us—for we may be better or worse than they suppose. The more clearly we are led to see the mind, character, and claims of Christ, the more we shall be humbled, or perhaps I should say humiliated, by the thought of our failure and incapacity. Compare the warnings against self-deception in James i. 22, 26, and 1 John i. 6.

Lessons and Encouragements

“But let each test his own work, and then Gal. vi. shall he have subject for boasting with reference ^{1-6.} to himself alone, and not to the other person, whom he is inclined to criticise, for after all each will have to bear his own burden of responsibility according to the task set him by the Master.” This sentence rudely awakens us from false security.

“Let him that is being instructed in the word ^{Teacher and Taught.} of the gospel give a share of all his goods to his instructor.” The word here used for instructor is that from which “catechism” is derived, and signifies the waking up of an echo. This is a hint for teachers. They should so put the truth that they awaken a response in the one taught: varieties of method will produce varieties in result. The Bible words for teaching are full of interest and deserve careful study. We also see that the gospel or Word is not only to be preached broadcast, but to be taught carefully and patiently to the individual hearer. Further, we learn what Paul had laid down elsewhere, and what our Lord Himself had set forth, namely, that the labourer is worthy of his hire—not indeed worthy in himself, but counted worthy by a gracious Master.

XXII

SOWING AND REAPING

GAL. vi. 7-10

7. Be not deceived ; God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9. And let us not be weary in well doing : for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Gal. vi.
7-10.
The
Christian
Open to
Attack.

"BE not deceived, do not err ;" a favourite phrase with St Paul (1 Cor. vi. 9 ; and xv. 33) and used also by St James (i. 16). Compare St John's words (1 John iii. 7), "Let no man deceive you," and again St Paul's, "Let no man deceive you with vain words" (Eph. v. 6). It is evident on reviewing these and other passages that the Christian is constantly liable to deception from within or from without ; and we find it to be so in our practical life. If there were no other reason, this would be sufficient to draw us to the constant study of the Scriptures of Truth, and to seek the constant guidance of the Spirit of Truth.

Sowing and Reaping

"Be not deceived ; God is not to be mocked : Gal. vi.
for whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap life everlasting." The illustration is familiar, but the truth illustrated is most serious. Paul is not dealing with creeds or with controversy, but with actual life. Every deliberate thought, word, or deed is a seed. It tells in one direction or another. It testifies what spirit you are of. It contributes to the formation of habit, and so of character. It has been well said that "no thought, no word, no act of man ever dies." Somewhere in this world he will meet the fruit of the past ; somewhere in the future life he will meet their gathered harvest. And Longfellow reminds us that—

"No action, whether foul or fair,
Is ever done but it leaves somewhere
A record written by fingers ghostly
As a blessing or a curse, and mostly
In the greater weakness or greater strength
Of the acts which follow it, till at length
The wrongs of ages are redressed,
And the justice of God made manifest."

The expression to sow to the flesh must be read ^{Sowing to} the _{Flesh.} in the light of what is said concerning the works of the flesh (chap. v.). It may be compared with

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. vi. what Paul says in Rom. xiii. 14, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Sin has its pleasures, but they are only for a season. How can any reasonable being sacrifice the permanent for the transient, the spiritual for the carnal?

Retribution. What is the consequence of such a course? It brings a sure result—Corruption. The wages of sin is death. Corruption must mean degradation. "From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." God is the Judge in each case, and He hath committed all judgment unto the Son. We are self-registering, and bear about—probably in mind and body—the actual result of our works, that is to say, of every product of our free will. God is a God of equity, and all due consideration will be shown to the ignorant, the infirm, and the heavily weighted. Still, as by a law of nature sowing leads to reaping, and is far-reaching in its result on human destiny. We are justified by faith; we are judged by the results of our faith. Paul once said, "Behold the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. xi. 22). He prefers to speak of God's goodness, but he dare not omit all mention of God's severity. It forms part of the righteous administration of Him Who is the Judge of all the earth. Those who abide in Christ will not be ashamed, but will have confidence in Him

Sowing and Reaping

at His appearing ; but for those who reject His call Gal. vi. and His mercy, Scripture gives no message of ^{7-10.} hope.

We turn with relief to the other side. “He that **Sowing.** soweth to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap life everlasting.” The gift of God is everlasting life ; but God proceeds according to righteous rule in the awarding of life. Accordingly we pass from the quality of the seed to the amount sown. “He that soweth little shall reap also little, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” Sowing when applied to life is a course of action, not an isolated act. In this respect it is like walking. He that walks in the Spirit sows to the Spirit. When he comes to the end of his earthly journey and of his earthly labour, he abides the Lord’s time, and when Christ is manifested, he also will appear with Him in glory, that is, in the glorious supremacy of good over evil. Spiritual action brings about a spiritual result.

And what a grand result is outlined by Paul —
And Reaping.

in two words ! The sower shalt be a reaper. He shall reap “life everlasting.” Who can fathom the meaning of this wonderful expression ? The life here spoken of is spiritual, and it is begun here. It is the Christ-life breathed into us by the Holy Spirit. It will never cease. Because Christ lives, the Christian will live also.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. vi.
7-10.
Encourage-
ment to
Good
Works.

"Let us not be weary in well doing." Pray and faint not (Luke xviii. 1). Bear tribulation of every kind, and faint not (2 Cor. iv. 16). The message is repeated in 2 Thess. iii. 13. One is often inclined to faint. Things go wrong ; our efforts fail ; other workers prove disappointing ; we are misunderstood ;—but under all these circumstances we cling to the promise, which reminds us of the charter granted to Noah. As Earth's harvest never proves an absolute failure, so shall it be with Heaven's harvest. "In due season—God's harvest season—we shall reap, if we faint not." We have the remedy against such faintness in Heb. xii. 2, 3, where we read, "Looking off unto Jesus, the author and the perfecter of the faith ; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him Who has endured such opposition of sinners against Himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your souls." "He giveth strength to the weak."

One more wise exhortation Paul is permitted to add : "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good towards all men, but especially towards them who are of the household of faith." This implies heart, thought, and action. It implies that we have a loving, sympathetic heart, that we think *about* others and *with* them, that we

Work for
Others.

Sowing and Reaping

desire means of lightening their burden and en- Gal. vi.
couraging them in the right course, and that we ^{7-10.} not only wish them well, but put our own shoulder to the wheel, using our energies and gifts as faithful stewards. Of course there must be subdivision of labour and some degree of co-operation. No one person can do everything; but each can do something if our heart is right, and it is our business to do the next thing. Our fellow Christians have the first claim on us, but others are not to be forgotten. This is true in the matter of home and foreign missions, but it is true also in the little things which make up our daily life.

XXIII

THE CROSS

GAL. vi. 11-18

11. Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

12. As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised ; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

13. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law ; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

14. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

16. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

17. From henceforth let no man trouble me : for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

18. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Gal. vi.
11-18.

Paul's
Countersign.

"SEE (or, ye see) with what large characters I write to you with my own hand." Paul's rule was to add a few words at the end of his letters in his own handwriting, the rest generally being dictated. Probably the last four verses of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians were so written ; and in 2 Thess.

The Cross

iii. 17, 18 we read, "The salutation of me, Paul, Gal. vi. with my own hand, which is the token in every Epistle: so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Already in those days there was risk of forgery (see 2 Thess. ii. 2), and from this the Churches were to be guarded, first, by the character of the messenger who brought the letter—because all letters went by hand in those days—and secondly, by the Apostle's own countersign.

In the present case, however, it is generally supposed that St Paul wrote the whole letter (though it is not absolutely certain), for the word translated in the Authorised Version "I have written," would naturally mean—according to the idiom of the day—I write, or I am writing. At any rate the closing sentences of the letter were the Apostle's autograph, and express the way in which he sought to drive home the leading ideas which he had been presenting.

One thing comes out more and more clearly as we draw to the close of our study of this letter, namely, the Apostle's intense interest in the Churches of Galatia, and his fervent desire to do all that in him lay to guard them from error and to establish them in the truth. He had stuck to his point throughout, and he once more drives home the teaching which he had emphasised all through.

His Zeal
for the
Galatians.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. vi.
11-18.

The
Meaning of
the Cross.

"As many as would make a fair show in the flesh, these press upon you that you should be circumcised, only in order that they may escape the persecution which comes through the Cross of Christ." The persons here referred to must have been Jewish Christians, but their Christianity was of a kind which it is not easy for us to understand—a Christianity without the Cross. Such a Christianity or adherence to Christ would have been intelligible and perhaps even pardonable during our Lord's life-time ; but everything was changed after His Crucifixion and Resurrection. What attitude was a Jew to take afterwards, say, on the Great Day of Pentecost ? He was taught on that day that God had made Him whom the Jews had crucified both Lord and Christ (Acts ii. 36). This crucifixion was a great national sin, but in one sense the effect of it had been counteracted by the Lord's resurrection and glorification.

Why the
Crucifixion?

Still every thoughtful Jewish inquirer would ask, Why did God permit this wonderful Being to suffer the degrading and unjust and agonising penalty of the Cross at all ? Why should He not have asserted Himself as Messiah, and straightway fulfilled all that was promised in the Old Testament ? The first answer, and one which would be sufficient for many minds, was this : The Crucifixion of the Lord was part of the programme prescribed in the Old Testa-

The Cross

ment. Jesus was "delivered up by the determinate Gal. vi. or definite counsel and foreknowledge of God" **11-18.** (Acts ii. 23). Compare Acts iii. 18, "those things which God declared beforehand by the mouth of all His prophets that the Messiah should suffer, He hath so fulfilled." Again and again the Lord had uttered the same truth, both before and after His crucifixion. The Jew who came to Christ had to accept the fact that what was on the part of his nation an awful murder was to be read in another light as well. It was overruled in order to carry out a preconceived plan devised by the Eternal God. Consequently, to overlook or ignore the Cross of Christ was to deprive the Christian faith of its foundation and of its spring. Paul had shown this briefly and clearly in the second and third chapters of this Epistle.

The preaching of the Cross was to the Jews a stumbling-block. It brought persecution. Therefore to avoid persecution some compromise (it was thought) must be found. Circumcision must be pressed as a necessity, and this, it was hoped, would pacify Jewish fanatics who would be taught that the Lord's death was to be regarded simply as a martyrdom and an example of love, and not as a propitiation and bearing of the curse on sin.

Paul proceeds, "For neither do they that are circumcised (and who press the necessity of circum-

Policy of the
Opponents.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. vi.
11-18.

cision) keep the law, but rather they would have you circumcised, that they might boast in your flesh," that is practically, in the fact that you had compromised with legalism in the form of circumcision. We have to notice that these legalists were not really keepers of the law, *i.e.* of what our Lord called the weightier matters of the law, which were summed up in the two great commandments—the love of God with all heart, and the love of our neighbour as ourselves. These critics of the Cross evidently had not much to boast of, and Paul deliberately adopts as his ground of boasting the very thing which they were ashamed of and wanted to get rid of.

Influence of
Christ's
Crucifixion
on our Life.

"But, as for me, God forbid that I should glory or boast save only in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through Whom (or, through which) the world is crucified to me and I to the world." All other things are secondary. This is primary and essential. Paul made his boast in Christ and Him crucified. He was the Lamb as it had been slain, the Sin-bearer Who knew not sin, and in Whom was no sin. It was on the cross that the Lord conquered the old original serpent, the Prince of this world. It was as lifted up on the cross that the Lord would become the centre of attraction to all men.¹ "The world is crucified to me." He speaks of it

¹ Part II., II., "The Grace and Cross of Christ."

The Cross

as an accomplished fact. It is as if he said, What Gal. vi. is the world to me now? What are all the things II-18. of which once I boasted? What is the A, B, C of The World the world (see chap. iv. 3) under which I was once crucified to me. tied and bound—for there is no hard and fast line between worldliness and formalism—what is it to me? It is crucified. It is, so to speak, a criminal or culprit on a cross. Look at its title. It is the world. Love not the world, neither the things which are in the world (1 John ii. 15). The friendship of the world is enmity with God (Jam. iv. 4).

“I am crucified to the world.” This is the other —And I to side. If Paul had bidden farewell to the worldly the World. spirit, seeing it in its true colours and in all its antagonism to the Spirit of God and of Christ, the world on its part had taken its measure of Paul. It had no use for him. His life-work was a continuous protest against the world-spirit. The world could say, as Ahab said of Micaiah, “I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil” (1 Kings xxii. 8). Thus Paul was despised and rejected of men, as his Master had been. And what was the cause of all this hopeless and irremediable opposition? It was Christ crucified. It was through Him that it had come about. The Lord had once said (John xii. 26), “If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be. If any

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. vi.
11-18.

man serve Me, him will My Father honour." First must come the following of Christ even unto death, then shall come the glory and honour and immortality, in fact, the Crown.

The New
Creation.

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is of force nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." On turning back to chap. v. 6 we read, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision is of force, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh through love." These passages give two sides of one truth. Faith works through love. That is to say, faith in Christ, realisation of all that He is and of all that He has done, has its effect and operates on the life through infusing the spirit of love into the whole. But this is practically a new creation, as Paul says to the Ephesians (ii. 10): we are God's workmanship or "make," created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath prepared or appointed beforehand that we should walk in them. This is the old truth, that the believer in the love of God which is in Christ crucified is born again, begotten from above, a son of God, so that he may walk as Christ walks. Thus the fruit of his faith is a loving, unselfish life.

When W. Hone, the unbeliever, had become a devoted follower of the faith which once he despised, he expressed his change of feeling in these words:—

The Cross

"The proudest heart that ever beat
Hath been subdued in me;
The wildest will that ever rose
To scorn Thy cause and aid Thy foes
Is quelled, my God, by Thee.

Gal. vi.
ii-18.

Thy will, and not my will, be one;
My heart be ever Thine;
Confessing Thee, the mighty Word!
My Saviour, Christ! my God! my Lord!
Thy Cross shall be my sign."

This is the true order of the Christian life; "and as many as take each step under the guidance of this rule or principle, peace be upon them, even upon the Israel of God." We are here reminded of Paul's words to the Philippians (iii. 13, etc.). Let us turn to them. He had been describing what he had given up for Christ and what he received and hoped for in Christ. He said he was racing through life, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and he bids those who are perfect, that is, those who are thorough and sincere, to walk or step out by the same rule. Join in imitating me, he says, and watch those that so walk as ye have me for an example and typical case. For many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ. They profess to be Christians, but will not let belief in Christ crucified become the spring of a

True and
False
Disciples
Contrasted.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. vi.
11-18.

new life. Their end is ruin. But what is the end of those who walk after the principle that underlies the crucifixion of Christ? Their headquarters are in heaven; their Saviour will come and transfigure them and conform their bodies to His glorious body. So it is with the true Galatian Christians.

The
Blessings
of the
Faithful.

They have peace now, for they are resting on a rock; they have mercy now, for they are in the charge of a merciful and faithful High Priest; and they have the Spirit which is the earnest of the inheritance promised to the true Israel, the Israel of God. This important addition reminded those to whom he wrote that he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, to whom praise comes not from men, but from God (Rom. ii. 28, 29). Peace shall be upon Israel (Ps. cxxv. 5; cxxviii. 6). It shall come on those who are Israelites indeed, and in whose spirit there is no guile (John i. 47).

XXIV

THE STIGMATA

GAL. vi. 17

From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

THE Apostle is closing. He is weary of controversy. His spirit of endurance is being sorely tested. "From henceforth, during the remainder of my time, let no one add to my toils, for I myself am bearing in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." What were these marks or *stigmata*? We sometimes use the word "stigma" in a figure of speech, as signifying an indelible mark of shame. A stigma is a brand, something burnt into one's very nature, physical or spiritual, just as a slave in old days might be branded with his master's mark.

These marks which Paul refers to were no fancy reproductions of our Lord's wounds, such as might possibly be caused by long brooding over crucifixion. Rather they were the scars which had been left by his persecutors. The Galatians knew something about them. In his first visit to them had

The Marks
on Paul's
Body.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. vi.
17.

not he and Barnabas hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord (Acts xv. 26)? Had not they been persecuted at Antioch (Acts xiii. 50)? Had not they been assaulted, used despitefully and stoned at Iconium (Acts xiv. 5)? Had he not been stoned again and dragged out of the city as a dead man at Lystra (Acts xiv. 19)? Must not these deeds of violence have left their marks on his body?

His
Sufferings.

Besides, we only know a little of what he had gone through. St Luke in writing an outline of Paul's missionary work passes over many things; but when we turn to the Second Epistle to the Corinthians we are enabled to fill up some of the gaps. In chap. vi. 4 of that Epistle he refers to his "afflictions, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, toils, sleeplessness, starvation"; and in chap. xi. 23, etc., he gives a catalogue of deeds of violence, some of which must have occurred before he wrote to the Galatians. He there tells of toils more abundant, stripes above measure, imprisonments frequent, deaths (mortal injuries) frequently, five times beaten by Jewish synagogue rulers, three times by Roman officers, once stoned, three times shipwrecked, a night and day spent in the deep, together with journeyings and troubles, flooded rivers, robbers, endless risks from all possible

The Stigmata

sources, toil, labour, sleeplessness, hunger, thirst, Gal. vi.
starvation, cold, nakedness.

17.

It is good for us to remind ourselves of these <sup>Their Appeal
to Us.</sup> things. They show what manner of man Paul was. They tell of his devotion and of his confidence. They take us on to his last and most touching letter to his dear friend Timothy, whose home had been in Galatia, and who knew about Paul's work there: "Thou hast fully known or followed down from the beginning my teaching, manner of life, aim, faithfulness, long-suffering, loving-kindness, patient endurance, persecutions, sufferings which came upon me in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra—what persecutions I had to bear, and how the Lord delivered me out of them all," 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11. Paul never courted persecutions; they came to him in the way of his missionary work, which was all under divine guidance.

XXV

LAST WORDS

GAL. vi. 18

Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

Gal. vi.
18.

The Work
of Grace.

"BRETHREN, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." The spirit is the inner man. To have grace in it and with it, is to have Christ, with whom we are united by the Holy Spirit. Paul had once said, "By the grace of God I am what I am." Can we say this? Words such as "grace" slip all too easily from our mouths. They become stereotyped, and lose their force. This word marks the freeness and undeservedness of the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It reminds us that we are under a covenant in which God gives everything and we give nothing; that we are justified freely, gratuitously, by His favour and loving-kindness to us; that this loving-kindness is manifested, made sure, sealed by the death of God's only Son upon the cross for us men and for our salvation, and we think of the words

Last Words

of Paul in 2 Cor. viii. 9, "Ye know the Grace of Gal. vi. our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich,^{18.} for your sake He became poor, that you by His poverty might be made rich."

Grace gives true spirituality, inspires us with loyalty in little things, enables us to say *No* to the world, the flesh and the devil, and to say *Yes* to our Father, gives us the victory over our lower self, lifts us above all that is mean and paltry, guards us against over-excitement and fussiness, conforms us to the mind of the Saviour, prepares us for eternity. In a word, it is "Christ in us, the hope of Glory."

This letter to the Galatians is a great gift. It would be a good thing for us who have studied it in detail, to read it over once more at a sitting. What should we find in it? That there is one Gospel, and only one, for all men whether Jew or Gentile; and there is no room, no need, no use for any other; that this one Gospel shatters all spiritual bondage and spells Liberty all round. It banishes legalism and ceremonialism; it extricates from the entanglement of the world; it breaks down the partition wall between nation and nation; it restores the children of men to the loving arms of their Heavenly Father; it is an active force which keeps us from idly floating down the current of our natural life and enables us to swim up stream.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. vi.
18.
What the
Gospel is.

What then is this Gospel which when received becomes such a force for good? It is gathered up in the Personality and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is God's own Son, sent into the world to redeem it, taking our nature upon Him, assuming the responsibilities and requirements both of the Abrahamic and of the Mosaic covenants, dying on the accursed tree as a sin-bearer—showing thereby His absolute loyalty to His Father, and His deep love towards the human race—raised up from the dead, and now working in the believer through the inbreathing of His Spirit. Faith in Him and in His mission brings about justification or gracious acceptance on the part of His Father and our Father. It leaves no room for a worldly or sensual life. It calls for decision and for loyalty; and it implies the presence and power of a Spirit higher than our own, by yielding to Whom we become fruitful in every good work. The act of submission to His gracious call thus leads to the life, walk and triumph of faith. All this and more is given us in Christ. It is good news indeed. It is like cold water to a thirsty soul. Let us turn this glad tidings into praise and prayer, and let us live it out in our lives.

O God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, I rejoice in the good news which this Epistle has so

Last Words

clearly brought before me. Write it in my heart Gal. vi.
to my everlasting comfort, and enable me by Thy ^{18.}
Spirit to live a devoted, pure, loving Christ-like
life to the glory of Thy great name, so that when
the harvest-time shall come I may reap life ever-
lasting through Jesus Christ my ever living
Saviour. Amen.

PART II

SHORT STUDIES ON SUBJECTS

IN THE EPISTLE

I

THE REVELATION OF THE SON OF GOD IN THE SOUL

GAL. i. 16

It pleased God to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen ; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.

EVERY true Christian has had his life story ; he Gal. i. 16. may forget much of it in later times, and could not reproduce his spiritual autobiography, but certain ^{Turning Points in Life.} turning-points in his life will be remembered, though the intervening stages may have vanished from his memory. We can sometimes recall the text of a sermon, the page of a book, the word of a friend, even a dream, or an inner pressure of thought and feeling, whereby the conception of God, of Christ, of life, of judgment, of present salvation, and of our own utter hopeless and helpless failure, has overwhelmed us. It has been a revelation ; and it may help us in some measure to understand what St Paul means when he refers to the revelation of God's Son in him and the formation of Christ in the Galatian believers.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i. 16. There are two sides to this, as to many other
God's Part departments of Christian life.
in Revealing Christ.

First, there is God's side. He takes the initiative in the new creation as in the original creation of the universe. When St Peter spoke out his conviction that Jesus was the Christ, the Lord said to him, "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 17). But in what way and to what extent and in how many stages was this revelation made? Already, two years earlier, Andrew had brought Peter to Jesus with the words, "we have found the Messiah," and during the intervening time he had learned much about the Lord, and he still had much to learn. How had Andrew himself learnt? Doubtless he was a well-instructed Israelite, and was no stranger to the main contents of the Law and the Prophets. He had also been a follower of John the Baptist, and had been taught the need of spiritual life, and had been pointed to the Lamb of God. Then he had enjoyed that most wonderful of gifts—a day with the Lord Jesus. Who can imagine what that day would be to a receptive soul?

The Case of Andrew. But we have to remember that the prophetic Scriptures which point to Christ had not yet been fulfilled. Even the circumstances connected with His birth and parentage were not generally known, for the Lord was regarded as "Jesus of Nazareth,

The Revelation of the Son of God

the Son of Joseph" (John i. 45). It must have Gal. i. 16. been therefore a revelation — an unveiling of Christ to the willing heart by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Nothing less can be said than this.

In the case of those fishermen, Andrew and Peter, there seems to have been no struggle, no mental opposition ; but how different was the attitude of Nicodemus to the Lord Jesus. Here was an aged man, a Jew, not a Galilean, a Pharisee, a Ruler, with a reputation to guard, an honest inquirer, but timid and shy. The need of spiritual birth, re-generation, re-creation, seems strange to him. How can these things come to pass ? He had forgotten the teaching of Joel, Ezekiel and other prophets, but he now learned from the Lord's own lips that lesson which is the Key to the Gospel, that God's feeling towards this sin-stricken world is one of love—and that love so intense as to bring about the greatest conceivable output of gracious self-sacrifice in the gift of One who is by original or eternal condition the Son. But the veil is still further drawn aside. Nicodemus is taught that the Son was given not only to live but to be lifted up, in some such sense as the brazen serpent was lifted up, in fact to die upon the cross—though Nicodemus could hardly see this yet—that the world through the Son might be saved.

*The Case of
Nicodemus.*

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i. 16. We may pass over other phases of the revelation
The Case of of Christ to the soul, and we come to Paul him-
St Paul. self. Here we are dealing not with a simple fisherman, nor with a respected but aged teacher, but with a young, ardent, fanatical enemy of Christ and His adherents. What was it that made Paul such a violent antagonist to Christianity? Was he zealous for the honour of the Temple and for the sanctity of the law of Moses (see Acts. vi. 13, 14); or was it because he was obsessed by a self-righteous spirit (see Rom. x. 3)? We are not clearly told, but both these causes probably had their influence. Meantime he was kicking against the pricks. He shut his eyes to the plain signs of the power of the Gospel in the loving lives of the Christian believers, and according to his own account he went from bad to worse (Acts. xxvi. 11). One feels that if such a one as this could be saved, any one could be saved. But how was it to be done? Again, as in the other cases, it must be by a revelation within, a presentation of the Son of God to the inner being; and it must be clear, vivid, living, powerful, winning. It must pull down the stronghold of Pharisaism, and banish all opposition. It must bring about a tremendous spiritual revolution, causing its object to throw overboard all in which he had hitherto trusted and glorified (see Phil. iii. 4-9).

The Revelation of the Son of God

These four cases—Andrew, Simon, Nicodemus, Gal. i. 16. Saul—are salient instances of the divine method of revelation. It would be interesting to take others—for example, the penitent thief, Lydia, the Philippian gaoler, and Cornelius. Really, no two cases are exactly the same.

Now let us look at the other side of this intensely interesting subject—the human side. Man's Part
in the
Revelation.

Some hearts are naturally—or rather supernaturally—receptive. We have to receive what God gives. We must receive Christ, if we would be God's children in deed and truth (John i. 12). We must come to Him as to a living stone, and then contact with Him causes us to be living stones (1 Pet. ii. 4). The Lord says, "Come unto Me," which is an invitation to definite action; again He says, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life" (John v. 40); and yet again, "No man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John vi. 44). St Paul says that no one can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. xii. 3). Thus we are drawn, but we must yield to the drawing influence; we are invited, and we must accept the invitation; the door is open, and we must go in; nay, Christ Himself knocks at the door of our heart, and we must open (Rev. iii. 20).

We are called to believe, to repent, to hearken,

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i. 16. to attend, to yield, to walk, to run, to fight the
Our Depend- good fight ; and for all these purposes our strength
ence on God. is not our own, but God's. Where then is boasting ?
and, on the contrary, Where is fatalism ? God sends
from above. He draws us, and we follow on.
So it was with Paul. I was not disobedient—he
says—to the heavenly vision. Our spiritual life is
a continuous dependence on God, a continuous
yielding to His Spirit, and a continuous turning
of His gracious impulses into action. Moreover,
to him who hath shall more be given. This is the
secret of growth. While from him who hath not,
that is, who doth not use what he hath, shall be
taken away even that which he seemeth to have.
It is possible to believe in vain (1 Cor. xv. 2), and
to receive the grace of God in vain (2 Cor. vi. 1).
Yes, possible, but surely not easy, for it is utterly
inconsistent with the first principles of life. God
makes His strength perfect in our weakness ; and
what would we have more ? Let us glorify Him
by bringing forth much fruit.

II

THE GRACE AND CROSS OF CHRIST

GAL. i. 6; vi. 18

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.

Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

THE word grace stands for free, undeserved, un- Gal. i. 6;
conditional favour. God is the God of all Grace vi. 18.
(1 Pet. v. 10). It is His eternal pleasure to give God's Grace.
freely. Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not (Jas. i. 5, 17). Creation is the output of divine energy and wisdom, and is conducted on orderly principles. Redemption is the output of divine love, and in it both the power of God and the wisdom of God are displayed (1 Cor. i. 24). Out of His tender love towards mankind the Father sent forth His own Son, who was, and is, one with Himself in nature and character, and Who is the Divine agent

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i. 6; in Redemption, as He was in Creation. His own Son—His only Son—no words could more clearly reveal the nature of the gift of God. And so Christ says, I and the Father are one (John x. 30)—not one Person, but one Substance. This is shown by the Greek word for *One*, which is in the neuter gender. Compare 1 Cor. iii. 8, where we read that He that planteth and He that watereth are *One*. Thus, when the Father gave His Son, to all intents and purposes He gave Himself. What the Son did and taught and suffered, that the Father, Who was in constant touch with the Son, may be regarded as doing and teaching and suffering. It was the special mission of St John, the Evangelist, to record our Lord's own words bearing on this subject. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not to someone else. The Son did not come to move His Father to pity. He came because His Father did really and truly pity us. He came to show that the Father loved us when we were dead in sin, not in word only, but in deed and in truth.

The Grace
of Christ.

As the Father gave the Son, so the Son gave Himself. The self-sacrifice of Christ reveals the height and depth and length and breadth of that love of His which surpasseth knowledge. He gave not grudgingly or of necessity, but as a cheerful giver. He emptied Himself, that is, He gave all

The Grace and Cross of Christ

that He had. As God spared not His own Son, so Gal. i. 6; Christ did not spare Himself. We see this in His vi. 18. submission to the limitation of human life from birth onwards ; we see it again in His life of thirty years in Nazareth, during which time He lived, in most outward respects, as an ordinary man ; we see it in His three years of ministration when He was going about doing good, teaching and working, with no settled home, no privacy, sometimes no time for proper food ; we see it in His submission to temptation, in His patience under hostile, undeserved criticism and bitter antagonism, and in His willingness to be associated with at least one false follower. In all this we get a new idea of God, of His working, of His wisdom, of His long-suffering. We read of God in Isaiah (lxiii. 9) that in all Israel's afflictions He was afflicted ; and so we may truly say concerning the life, labours, temptations, and sufferings of Christ, that in all these things God was entirely identified with His Son.

If it is true that Christ did not spare Himself during the earlier stages of His earthly life and ministration, what shall we say when we come to the thrilling record of His death ! The four Evangelists, who had only lightly sketched His life, give us full and graphic accounts of His death. All leads up to this. We follow Him from the

The Grace
of the Cross.

Epistle to the Galatians

Gal. i. 6; large upper room down into the valley and into the
vi. 18. olive orchard. We reverently listen to the prayer
in which self-will yields to the divine will—and
this is the true sacrifice on which all depends. We
stand by as the betrayal, the desertion, the
accusations, the condemnations, the shameful in-
justices and deeds of personal violence follow in
swift succession. At last He is lifted up on the
cross, and that cross bears Him Who bears the
world's sin. Then all is "finished," and the Son
commits His Spirit to His Father.

The Meaning.

What can it all mean? It means man's hatred
of the living and true God. But it means some-
thing else. The deliberateness on Christ's part,
and the way in which all things led up to it—the
time, the place, the circumstances—show the hand
of God. We are thus once more driven back to the
true position: God was in Christ reconciling the
world unto Himself. Observe: death was not the
end of Christ's life. In three short days He had
risen, and the grave in which He had been reverently
placed proved to be empty. He was the Living One,
the Prince or Author of life, and death could not
hold Him.

The Old Testament and the New.

The Old Testament contains a long series of
historical books which begin with an outline of the
early days of mankind, and soon concentrate atten-
tion on a chosen man, Abraham; on his family,

The Grace and Cross of Christ

Israel ; on the laws and ritual committed to this Gal. i. 6 ; strange people ; on the ups and downs of their vi. 18. history ; and on the writings of some of their prophetic men. From the 12th of Genesis onward there are promises, charters, things to be expected. So it is to the end. The Old Testament closes in an atmosphere of expectation. The various interventions and prophetic utterances which we find all through point to some world-wide intervention for the benefit of the Race. In fact, there was a programme to which many unwittingly contributed, but no one could read it until it was fulfilled. At last in Christ the pieces of the puzzle find their proper places. The law, the prophets, the Psalms are fulfilled (Luke xxiv. 44) ; and the Lord's immediate followers have their understandings opened that they might understand the Scriptures.

Guided by the light of the Four Gospels we read our Old Testament with fresh eyes. The Kings, the Judges, the Priests, the Prophets, the Shepherds of Israel served their purpose and contributed their illustrations of Him Who was to come. So did the Paschal Lamb, the various sacrifices, the rites of the Day of Atonement, the exodus, the manna, the rock, the right of redemption, the ceremonial curse of Him Who was hanged on a tree. The same was the case with the

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Gal. i. 6 ; vi. 18. budding of the almond rod and the other types of the Lord's Resurrection. God was indicating, in many ways and at different times and through varied agencies, what He was about to do for the welfare of the world.

The Results
of Divine
Grace.

What are the practical results of this manifestation of divine grace ? The more we study the Epistles, the more clearly we see that the Christian life is the practical result of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. He died to put us under a new obligation to God ; He died to give a particular character to our life, or, as St Peter says, to give us an example (1 Pet. ii. 21), so that we should walk as He walked (1 John ii. 6), or, to use our Lord's own graphic teaching—that as He washed His disciples' feet so we should wash one another's feet ; in other words, that we should put ourselves out of our way and count nothing too mean or too inconvenient to be done for His Name's sake.

But the force of Christ's example would be utterly lost if His death were not something else. Standing back and looking on His sacrificial work as a whole, we see that it was a complete undoing of the mischief wrought by Satan. As sin is human rebellion and consequent ruin, so the obedience of Christ brings salvation. As Satan deceives and brings darkness and death upon man, so Christ undeceives and brings spiritual light and eternal life.

The Grace and Cross of Christ

As we have gone astray like lost sheep and turned Gal. i. 6; everyone to his own way, so Christ has yielded to vi. 18. His Father and laid down His life for the sheep, that He might bring us back into the loving arms of God.

In regarding this whole wonderful transaction <sup>The Work
of the Holy
Spirit.</sup> we must not forget to give honour to the Holy Ghost. It was through the Eternal Spirit that Christ offered Himself without spot to God (Heb. ix. 14); and it is through that same Spirit that we live the Christ-like life. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and Son. He is our bond of union with Christ, as Christ is our bond of union with the Father.

III

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

GAL. iii. 5

He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh
miracles among you, *doeth he it* by the works of the law, or by
the hearing of faith ?

Gal. iii. 5. GENESIS xv. opens thus: “After these things
The Promise (*i.e.* after the rescue of Lot) the Word of the
to Abraham.

Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying,
Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy
exceeding great reward.” In reply Abram
expresses his sorrow that he had no son to
inherit what he possessed. But the Word of
the Lord brought him forth abroad and said,
“Look now toward heaven, and count the stars,
if thou be able to number them: and He said
unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed
in the Lord; and He counted it to him for
righteousness.”

St Paul’s comment on these words is to be
found in Romans iv.: “What shall we say then
that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the
flesh, hath found? for if Abraham were justified

Justification by Faith

by works, he hath something to boast of; but Gal. iii. 5. it was not so before God. For what saith the Scripture? *Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.* . . . He believed God Who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Against hope (*i.e.* when there seemed to be no hope) he believed, in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken,—*So shall thy seed be.* And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised He was able also to perform. And therefore *it was counted to him for righteousness*" (vers. 1-22).

We have here a careful analysis of Abraham's ^{Abraham's} _{Faith.} faith. It is again referred to by St Paul in our Epistle (Gal. iii. 6) and by St James (ii. 23). The incident is a very important one, and the original words call for careful study, for they are clearly used by the Apostles to illustrate and establish the position of faith in relation to the rest of the Christian teaching. Turning again to Gen. xv. 6 we find three words in it which occur here for the

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Gal. iii. 5. first time in the Bible: (a) to believe, (b) righteousness ; and (c) to be accounted.

On Believing God. A careful examination of all passages in the Hebrew Bible where the word "believe" is found fixes its usage.¹ To believe God means to take God to be true, to realise that what He says is true; in other words, to take God at His word. If He promises anything, the believer is sure that it will come true. If He orders anything, the believer will do the thing ordered. This is the sum and substance of the whole matter; but this simple Abrahamic faith has something behind it. How was Abraham to know that God had spoken, and that He had received a message from the one living and true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Ruler and Over-ruler, the Judge of all the earth? Abraham had come from Ur of the Chaldees in obedience to a Voice (Gen. xii. 1), and that Voice had at times been accompanied by an appearance and manifestation (Gen. xii. 7), so that there had been an appeal to two senses —hearing and sight, both, no doubt, spiritualised, stimulated and quickened by a special Force. Moreover, Abraham had already, from time to time called upon God, and devoted himself to Him by building an altar to His name (Gen. xii. 7; xiii. 4, 18).

¹ See the author's "Synonyms of the Old Testament," Second Ed. ; Nisbet & Co.

Justification by Faith

But we have to push our inquiry back to the Gal. iii. 5. old Chaldean home of Abraham's progenitors. Early Belief. Fortunately we can do this more clearly than was the case in former times. Guided by the early chapters of Genesis, we see that there was a line of believers in the one God, the Lord Jehovah, the God of Noah. Guided by recent research, we are given to understand that besides the hero-gods which each city or state worshipped, there was one Being dimly recognised as the true spring of divinity.¹ It is this Being, the God of his fathers, who had spoken to Abraham, and in Whom Abraham believed. The Patriarch was fully persuaded that this God had spoken to him, and that what He promised He was able also to perform. He was perfectly aware of the difficulties of the position, but he "considered" them not; that is to say, he would not let his mind dwell on them. He was fully persuaded of God's goodness, faithfulness, and power. So he took the Lord at His word. This is faith.

Passing to the second word in our passage, we To Account. have to notice that the expressions to count, account, impute, reckon, are four English words for one and the same Hebrew word. It is sometimes used in a commercial sense, sometimes in a judicial. Its usage is fully considered in ch. xiv.

¹ See "Sumir and Accad," by L. King.

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Gal. iii. 5. of the book on "Old Testament Synonyms" just referred to. In human affairs it always implies some mental process. There is nothing artificial or unreal about it, any more than there is when St Paul says to Philemon, "Put it down to my account" (Phil. 18). There is grace behind it in such a case, but no unreality. When the word is used of a divine transaction, as in the verse before us, there must be something in God answering, however remotely, to a human mental process ; it would be simple, not complicated, and instantaneous, not long-drawn ; and it would spring out of God's essentially gracious nature.

Righteousness.

We now come to the third great word—Righteousness. The root of the original Semitic word is found in the second part of the name of the King of Salem, viz., Melchi-zedek (Gen. xiv. 1) ; and we are familiar with it in the name of another king of the same region, Adoni-zedek ; also in the name of the last king of Judah *Zedek-jah* (the righteousness of the Lord, or, the Lord is righteous). Righteousness, regarded as a quality, must signify conformity to the divine order, that is, to what is right in God's sight. It is not what *we* think right, but what He regards as right. Its fruits may be seen in everyday life, but its root is in God Himself. There is none absolutely righteous but He. And in the human race there is only the Righteous One

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to Whom God gave His Spirit without measure Gal. iii. 5. inasmuch as He is His only Son. If it is true that God is essentially and eternally love, then love must be the spring of all true righteousness, and to yield to the impulse and inspiration of heaven-sent love is to fulfil the law or rule of righteousness. All self-righteousness is abolished. To love and to be loved, to have God in the heart, to govern our daily life by the principle of God-like, Christ-like, holy love—this is the will of God.

But there is a little word on which much hangs—“*For*.” the little word *for*. “He counted it to Abraham *for* righteousness.” Not *as if it were* righteousness, but *for*, that is to say, for the attainment of a righteous position. Is this the right explanation of the word? We turn again to the 4th of Romans to see how St Paul puts the matter. We here find that what is called in Genesis the being counted for righteousness, is condensed into one word, the being *justified*. Abraham’s faith is the ground of his justification. He was justified, or accounted righteous, not because of what he had done, but because of his full persuasion that what God promised was true. Justification is a judicial word, and is opposed to condemnation. It is sometimes scoffed at as a “forensic” expression, but when we read that God justifies the ungodly (Rom. iv. 5), we are dealing with a great reality. It stands for the

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Gal. iii. 5. divine verdict. So it is with the Lord's solemn assertion, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified" (Luke xviii. 14). God's verdict on his case was favourable. So it was with Abraham.

It is to be noticed here that the illustration derived from the Judicial act of justification is not quite the same as that which is drawn from the Paternal act of forgiveness. The one is the pronouncing Not guilty, and is the consequent acceptance of the sinner. The ground of this acceptance does not lie in the word, but in something else, namely, the redemption which is in Christ Jesus (Rom. iii. 24). The other is the direct deed of a loving Father, and is sealed and made sure by the same blood-shedding.

Our Own Case.

Up to this point we have been mainly discussing Abraham. But let us come to our own case. All this, says St Paul, was written not for Abraham's sake alone, but for us also to whom righteousness shall be imputed, in other words, who shall be justified, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, Who was delivered up because of our offences, and was raised because of our justification. St Paul is very practical. He is not discussing a question of Biblical archaeology, but is earnestly setting forth the true way of righteousness through faith in God. Abraham's faith, we have

Justification by Faith

seen, hung on the Divine promise concerning the Gal. iii. 5. future ; our faith, says St Paul, hangs on two things which God has done, the giving up of the Lord Jesus to die for us, and the raising up of the same Lord Jesus to be the embodiment of our righteousness.

Saving, justifying faith takes hold of a crucified and risen Lord. It flies to Him for refuge, it draws virtue from Him, that is, from the Holy Spirit, as the constant secret of life, it sets its hope on Him for final conformity to His likeness on the day of His appearance (1 John iii. 2), and it rests on Him as faithful and true amidst the emergencies and strains of life. Thus the tendency of *imputed* righteousness is to produce *imparted* righteousness ; and the love of God Who justifies us becomes in us a transforming power in the direction of a loving life.

If God wanted to renew man's trust in Him and dependence on Him, could He have found a better way ? Experience shows that faith in Christ is the spring of a true life. A fruitless faith is a dead faith, but a living, loving faith aims at being fruitful in every good work. Christ gave His whole self for us, and He claims our whole selves. He asks for no half-hearted service. Having put our hand to the plough, we must not look back. The old Adam in us is not to be modified, but to be crucified, that we may be transformed, and that He may be the first-born among many brethren. There is no merit

Saving Faith
at Work.

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Gal. iii. 5. in this. We claim nothing on account of our doings. We joyfully receive what He lovingly gives, and we find it heaven to please Him. The rest we leave in His hands for Eternity.

There is no other way. To exhibit our good works, our repentance, our innocence, our ignorance, our weakness, in the light of God's unerring judgment is to court failure. But to plead His love manifested in Christ crucified, and to submit ourselves to His own test of the reality of our convictions, that is, to a life which is the fruit of faith—that is the way of salvation.

IV

CHRIST AND THE LAW

GAL. iii. 19

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.*

THE principle of order runs through the Universe. Gal. iii. 19. This is true of the physical and chemical world, of the movements of heavenly bodies, and of the constitution of atoms. The fixity of nature thus involved is frequently referred to in Scripture, especially in the Psalms; and all the orderly arrangement of nature is attributed to the will, wisdom, and power of God. When our first parents were created, they came under the principle of order. They had their possibilities and their limitations. So far as they were of the earth, they partook of the earth's order, and so far as their nature was linked more directly with God, and with the Spirit-world, they came under spiritual regulations; and the breach of these regulations meant sin and ruin.

In the age of the patriarchs we find both Revela- Law in the
tion and also Spiritual Law in full operation. God Patriarchal
Age

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Gal. iii. 19. says of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment" (Gen. xviii. 19). Justice and judgment are thus set forth as the foundation principles of Right because they are God's way, and because the human conscience, which is the voice of God, is in tune with them. We can recognise the broad and somewhat rude lines of justice and judgment in the code of Hammurabi (or Amraphel), which embodies the natural and civil law of Chaldea and the East in patriarchal times. In Gen. xxvi. 5 God says to Isaac concerning Abraham that "he obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." This is the only place in the whole Book of Genesis in which the Hebrew word *Torah*, usually translated law, occurs, and it is only found in the plural number in four or five other places in the whole Old Testament.

The Word "Torah."

What then is the meaning and usage of this word *Torah*, which occurs in the singular number in above a hundred passages in the Bible? It is derived from a Hebrew word (*yarah*) which means to guide or teach.¹ Law thus means guidance or direction and sounds parental rather than Despotic. We find both the verbal root and the noun derived from it

¹ See "Old Testament Synonyms," ch. xvii. for an examination of this and other legislative words.

Christ and the Law

in Ex. xxiv. 12, “I will give thee tablets of stone, Gal. iii. 19, and a *law*, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest *teach* them.” The Greeks adopted the word *nomos* as a rendering for *Torah*. It means something *assigned* or apportioned, a principle, a custom or usage. It is used in a very wide sense in Greek philosophy, but cannot be considered an exact translation of the Hebrew term. Then comes the Latin rendering, which we and other Western natives reproduce in the form of *law* and *legislation*. This gives a Roman idea, and is far removed from the original thought of teaching and guidance. It is too late to alter the word which we have inherited, but we must try to bear in mind the original word, and to remember that though St Paul wrote in Greek he thought in Hebrew.

When we trace the word “*law*” through the Old “*Law*” in the Old Testament we find it very rarely in Exodus; it is used in the sense of ritual in Leviticus and Numbers; in the sense of instruction in Deuteronomy, being specially applied to the written instruction issued by Moses; so also in Joshua, Kings, Chronicles, and the later books. The word “*Code*,” of which we hear so often now, is hardly applicable to the Mosaic teaching, for it was originally issued piece-meal. An attempt to “codify” it may be seen in Josephus. First came “the Ten Words” or Commandments, which were based on the recognition of

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Gal. iii. 19. God as Israel's Redeemer. They constituted the Book of the Covenant. Then came the "judgments" or bye-laws (Ex. xxi. 1); then the reproduction of these bye-laws in Ex. xxxiv.; and lastly, the exposition of all these instructions by Moses in his final speeches. On examining them we find them to be partly civil, partly ritual, and all based on certain religious principles concentrated in the utterance, "I am the Lord." It is noteworthy, however, that there are no directions for prayer, either personal or public; yet some of the people knew the power of prayer—Moses, for example, and Samuel, and there must have been the nucleus of the synagogue system from very early days.

It is interesting to observe that there was something very attractive about the law. What could it have been? How was it that men delighted in the law of the Lord (Ps. i. 2, cxix. 70, 72, 92, 97, 113, 174)? It is not easy to answer. Was it because these "instructions" were adapted to the needs of the people? or because they set forth the wisdom and paternal goodness of God? or was it rather that the law in its foundation principles is inseparably linked with the wonderful works of God in the redemption and preservation of Israel? Probably the last view is the true one.

The Law
and the
Covenant.

The Law was the basis of the Covenant, and its inauguration is vividly described in Ex. xxiv.

Christ and the Law

It was easy for Israel to say, "All the words Gal. iii. 19. which the Lord hath said we will do"; but, alas! they utterly failed. The many tokens of God's mercy which they subsequently enjoyed were not granted to them because they had kept the terms of the covenant, but because of God's original promise to Abraham. Jeremiah (ch. xxxi. 32) sums the matter up in a sentence, "My covenant they brake, though I was a husband unto them." Hence the need of a new and better covenant, the terms of which Jeremiah is permitted to announce, and which was ratified by the blood-shedding of Christ (Matt. xxvi. 28).

What are we to understand by "the works of the law," and "the righteousness of the law," of which St Paul speaks? These expressions may point to what our Lord described as the "righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees." We can illustrate them by Matt. xv. 1-20, and by Matt. xxiii. There were ritual observances and hair-splitting distinctions, whereby the traditions of men gradually took the place of the commandments of God. Paul was once under their dominion, and knew by personal experience the sad tendency in human nature to gravitate in the direction of ritual *minutiae*, and to fight for what is at best conventional, temporary, and variable, to the neglect of what is eternal and spiritual. The Lord puts the matter

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Gal. iii. 19. shortly in the prayer of the Pharisee (Luke xviii. 11, 12), and St Paul in the words, "Touch not; taste not; handle not" (Col. ii. 21).

Did Christ abrogate the moral law? By no means. He came not to destroy, but to fulfil. The laws of Right and Wrong stand for ever. Jeremiah did not say that the law of God was to be abrogated, but that God would write it in a new place—the heart. In what sense then is Christ the end of the law for righteousness for all them that believe (Rom. x. 4)? In this sense, that He becomes the sum and substance of it, the embodiment of it. He had recalled man's mind to the fact that the old law was summed up in two great principles—the love of God (Deut. vi. 5), and the love of his neighbour (Lev. xix. 18); and when He issued the New Commandment it was summed up in His own love, for they were to love one another as He had loved them (John xiii. 34).

The Law of Liberty.

James calls the law of God the perfect law of liberty (ch. i. 25), and speaks of the love of our neighbour as the royal law, that is, the King of laws (ch. ii. 8); and this expression answers to what St Paul says in Rom. xiii. 8. He sums the matter up thus: Walk in love, as Christ also loved us (Eph. v. 2). This walking in love gives the true character to all our thoughts, aims, and activities. We say to ourselves, If I could only walk in love

Christ and the Law

as Christ loved me, all would be well. But how Gal. iii. 19. can I do it? Paul answers, Walk in the Spirit (Gal. v. 16). I need His vital force. I need the revelation of God's redeeming love in Christ. I need to realise that I am justified, sanctified, adopted, not because of my poor efforts after goodness, but because of God's infinite, encircling love. The Lord no longer says to me, Do this and live, but, Live and do this. Then the righteousness of the law will be fulfilled in me in a true sense (Rom. viii. 4).

V

THE POSITION OF THE JEW UNDER THE NEW COVENANT

GAL. iii. 28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Gal. iii. 28. NATIONALITY is recognised all through the Bible.
Bible Nations. It sprang out of the extension and continuance of the Family, and that began from some leading personage such as Nimrod, Abraham, Ishmael, Esau. What is apparently spoken of in Scripture as an individual, proves at times to be a nation. When Rebekah was about to become a mother, the following strange message reached her :—"Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels ; also people shall be stronger than people ; and the elder shall save the younger" (Gen. xxv. 23). Compare Malachi (i. 2, 3), "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." See also the blessing and curse on Noah's sons (*i.e.* the nationalities which sprang from them)

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given in Gen. ix. 25. There is an important passage Gal. iii. 28. preserved in Gen. x. 1-32, which at first sight has to do with the personal descendants of Noah, but which also records national relationship. In later parts of the Bible much is said concerning the rise and fall of nations and of empires. Egypt, Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, together with the various peoples inhabiting Canaan and its neighbourhood, such as the Amorites, Sidon, Tyre, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, Amalek, etc.—these are successively brought to the front, usually in connection with Israel; they play their part for a little while, and then vanish from the scene. Each may have had its mission, each had its heroes, its traditions, its records of worship, its customs, its dialect. They were thus distinct peoples, but were branches of the great human Tree. So St Paul says of them (Acts xvii. 26), “God hath made of one [blood], *i.e.* from one source, all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined, or marked out, the fore-appointed periods, and also the limits of their habitation.” This witness is as true now as it was in old days.

Among these various ancient nations there stood out one which was, at least from a Biblical point of view, conspicuous. Thanks to their sacred writings, we know more about the origin and

The Hebrew Nation.

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Gal. iii. 28. history of this nation than of any other ancient people. We know the man from whom they sprang, and we can trace his ancestry back to primæval history. We know the region in which he originally lived. It is now a series of ruinous heaps, but it was then a centre of learning and civilisation. We know Whom he worshipped, for it is the Being Whom we worship now. We trace his family until it becomes a twelve-tribed nation. It is the recipient of special promises, grants, charters, and, amid boundless failures and sufferings, its history was carried on through many centuries, dispersion following dispersion, until at last the metropolis of this proud, stiff-necked people was destroyed, and the nation itself was scattered to the four winds of heaven. And yet it survives. There are from ten to twelve millions of this people now in existence in England, on the continent, especially in Poland and Southern Russia, in the Turkish empire, and of late years largely in North America. The people show no signs of dying out. They are prolific, long-lived, clever, adaptive, great linguists, musicians, money-makers, and money-lenders. They are also moral and religious.

Whence is their religion? They point in answer to their Hebrew Scriptures, *i.e.* to our Old Testament. In addition to this—practically often

The Position of the Jew

as a substitute—they point to ancient written and Gal. iii. 28. unwritten traditions.

If we wish to see the full force of the survival ^{Its} of nationality for thousands of years under the most untoward circumstances, we find it in Israel. If each nation has a special mission, this unique nation must have one. Is it finished? can it be so? The fact that a nation is scattered does not show that its mission is closed. It may be quite the contrary. Scattering may mean dissemination. The people may be “sown” through the world for a special object (Hos. ii. 23).

Now we must turn to the New Testament. We find in it the distinction which is noteworthy all through the Old Testament between the people of Israel and the surrounding nations. The latter are frequently spoken of in the English Bible as heathen or Gentiles. But there is only one word for heathen, Gentiles, nations, either in Hebrew or in Greek. In spite of the distinction just noticed, Christianity was to be international and world-wide. The message of the Gospel naturally went first to the people among whom it was brought into being; but it was not to stop there. All men needed the same Gospel, for all had sinned. It was manifestly an effort to the Israelite missionaries to recognise that they and the surrounding nations were on the same level in this respect, and

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Gal. iii. 28. they pulled down the walls of partition with great reluctance. Again and again there was a tendency to relapse, and to demand that Gentile Christians should be regarded as proselytes to the Judæo-Christian faith ; and Paul was raised up to fight against this tendency, and finally to conquer it.

Unity and
Nationality.

Christians are regarded as all one in Christ. Whether they are men or women, whether they are rude barbarians, domineering Romans, philosophic Greeks, or descendants of Abraham, they have the same Saviour, the same way of access, and the same gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus. But does this unity involve a doing away with nationality ? does a Roman cease to be a Roman because he has become a Christian ? Certainly this is not the teaching of the Epistles. Sex-distinctions remain ; the relationship between master and servant remains ; the privileges attaching to Roman citizenship can still be claimed ; and the Hebrew is still a Hebrew. What then has happened ? It is this : that while national distinctions still exist, something greater has come in. Christ has become the supreme King, and rules over the heart in such a way that other things take the second place. The Christian belongs to Christ. Consequently, he is Abraham's seed, and an heir according to the promise (Gal. iii. 29).

The Position of the Jew

Still, the Jew's case is unique. In the time of Gal. iii. 28, Christ, Israel had its Bible, its sacrificial worship, ^{The Jew under} its national feasts, its religious centre. Now, Christianity, however, those who believe in Christ as their crucified, risen, ascended, and coming King, have a more spiritual worship, new memorial feasts, a High Priest who ever lives, and a Jerusalem or mother-city which is above. The Jew is no longer under the law of Moses as such, but is under the law of Christ. His righteousness is deeper and more spiritual than that of the Scribes and Pharisees. What then may he retain of his old religious institutions, and what must he give up? Is he to throw overboard everything which is distinctively Israelite, and to let his nationality be merged in that of the nation among whom he happens to be living? Was it wicked to circumcise Timothy? Was it wrong to take and keep a Jewish vow? Was it unchristian to keep the Passover, on the ground that Christ was our true Pascal Lamb? The answer seems to lie between the individual and his God. On the one hand, God's charter to Israel was unconditional, and is irrevocable (Rom. xi. 29). The *nation* has its hope, and in the fulness of time it will be fulfilled. On the other hand, the *individual*, on yielding to the claim of Christ, may be drawn to throw overboard all that he was formerly proud

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Gal. iii. 28. of. Knowing that he is a joint-heir with Christ, he may marry a Gentile Christian wife, and may drop suddenly or gradually all the observance which once seemed to form the life of his religion. Paul did this, and his stirring cautions against relapse are backed up by his example. The Epistle to the Hebrews tends in the same direction. The Epistles of St Peter, written to Hebrew-Christians, pay little regard to the preservation of Judaic observances, and the same is true of St James' short Epistle. St John, the latest of the Hebrew-Christian apostolic writers, lays so much stress on spiritual religion that there seems hardly room for the inherited system of Judaism to run parallel with it. We must not pursue the subject into the post-apostolic writings,¹ but may observe, in conclusion, the wisdom of Him Who said in reference to this subject, that "no one having drunk old wine straightway desireth new ; for he saith, The old is better" (Luke v. 39). It is evidently the part of the missionary to the Jews to press the excellency of the new Covenant in Christ with such force and with such arguments that the old may gradually give way to the new. We may leave the Lord Himself to solve the rest.

The most interesting discussion on Judaism in

¹ See Epistle to Diognetus (iii., iv.) on the differences between Jewish and Christian worship ; also Epistle of Barnabas (ii., iii.) and Ignatius to the Magnesians (chap x.).

The Position of the Jew

connection with Christianity is by Justin Martyr Gal. iii. 28. (A.D. 150). In this "Dialogue with Trypho" the Jew says to the Christian, "First be circumcised, then observe the Sabbath, the feasts—and the new moons, in a word, do all things which have been written in the law, and then perhaps you will obtain mercy." Again, "You Christians profess to be pious, but you do not alter your mode of living from the nations; you do not keep Sabbaths or circumcision, but rest your hopes on a man that was crucified. . . . Have you not read that the soul shall be cut off from his people who shall not have been circumcised in the eighth day? and this was ordained for strangers and for slaves equally. You despise the Covenant rashly." The answer given is, that Christ is the end of the law, and the new covenant is in Him, and Abraham was approved of when he was yet uncircumcised; also that the new law calls on us to keep perpetual Sabbath, and not to be idle on one day of the week. The mosaic ritual was appointed for the hardness of man's heart, and was no good in itself, and it is vain to boast of being children of Abraham, as if that in itself would secure you. True righteousness is only to be obtained by Christ, and we need no cleansing but by the Holy Spirit (see chaps. viii.-xxv.)

Judaism and Christianity.

VI

THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

GAL. v. 16

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Gal. v. 16. ALTHOUGH St Paul writes vigorously against The Call for justification by the works of the law, he is by no Good Works. means opposed to good works. On the contrary, he calls us to be fruitful in every good work (Col. i. 10), to be prepared for every good work (2 Tim. ii. 21), to be ready for every good work (Tit. iii. 1). Women are to be adorned with good works (1 Tim. ii. 10), widows to be well reported for good works (1 Tim. v. 10), and the rich to be rich in good works (1 Tim. vi. 18). What are these good works, and by what power are they wrought? They are not the works of the flesh, but the fruit of the Spirit. It is God Who worketh in us both to will what is good and to do what is good. He establishes us in every good work (2 Thes. ii. 17), and makes us perfect in every good work (Heb. xiii. 21).

The Flesh and the Spirit

The distinction between the flesh and the spirit Gal. v. 16. needs careful consideration. The word "flesh" is used primarily of the material tissue of which the body is composed, including the organs, the muscles, the veins, etc. "Flesh and blood" stands for the material side of human nature as contrasted with the spiritual. The same is the case with "flesh and bones." "A spirit hath not flesh and bones" (Luke xxiv. 39). The material of which man's body is composed is akin to that which is formed in all other organised beings, although it is true that all flesh is not the same flesh. In a true and humiliating sense the human body is akin to the dust of the earth. This truth is brought vividly before us in Gen. ii. 7, "God moulded Adam of the dust of the ground"; and again (iii. 19), "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"; and again (Eccl. iii. 20), "All are of the dust, and all turn to dust again"; and once more (1 Cor. xv. 47), "The first man was of the dust, dust-born."

The word flesh is used in a secondary sense of **The Flesh.** ordinary human nature, as in John i. 14, "The Word was made flesh," also of the faculties and passions which it possesses, apart from the consideration of that spiritual life which is granted and sustained from above. Hence the Lord says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John iii. 6);

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Gal. v. 16. and again, “The flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John vi. 63). It is in this sense that we sometimes find the word flesh used in the Old Testament, *e.g.* Ps. lvi. 4, “I will not fear what flesh can do”; Isa. xxxi. 3, “The Egyptians are men, and not God ; and their horses flesh, and not spirit.”

A further use of the word grows out of this secondary sense, and is specially to be found in St Paul’s writings. He recognises that the fleshly or carnal side of human nature has to do mainly with objects of sense, as in the animal world. It is psychical (A.V. “natural”), not spiritual (1 Cor. xv. 44). But animalism stands for externalism, and so for superficialism. In this way he is led to teach that devotion to the externals of religion develops or fits in with the carnal (*i.e.* fleshly) mind. The law, in the Pharisaic sense, tends to the substitution of ceremonial for spiritual life and worship ; and so it is contrasted with the superhuman vital force of the Spirit of Christ.

The Spirit.

Now we turn to the word “spirit,” which faces us in the second verse of the Bible. All divine truth has to be expressed in human language and to be illustrated by human analogies. On examining the Biblical history of this very important word, we find it to stand for two ideas with which

The Flesh and the Spirit

we are all familiar.¹ The first is Wind, which Gal. v. 16. gives the thought of an unseen force; and the second is Breath, which marks both life and feeling. By these two ordinary uses of the Hebrew word we are led to see how it can be applied both to God Himself and to that inner region of the man which God inspires and in which God works.

Passing over the teaching of the Old Testament, ^{The Out-} which is in full accord with that of the New and ^{pouring of} ^{the} ^{Spirit.} largely preparatory for it, we reach the great doctrine of the outpouring and indwelling of the Spirit. The announcement of this dispensation of the Spirit, which was set forth by John the Baptist, and referred to by our Lord again and again, was followed by its inauguration on the great Day of Pentecost. From that time onwards believers in Christ were regarded as temples of the Holy Spirit, and were knit together through this agency as one body in Christ, and as living stones built on the Living Stone. Christ now wrought through His Spirit as the true Head of the Church, breathing spiritual life into every receptive heart, so that each Christian became a piece of God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. ii. 10). The works of the flesh, the products of the natural unassisted will, are ousted, conquered,

¹ See "Old Testament Synonyms," chap. iv., for a full discussion.

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Gal. v. 16. neutralised, mortified (*i.e.* deadened), crucified, by this new vital force. The operation of the Spirit, however, is not only in this sense destructive, it is also in the same measure, and in an even higher degree, constructive. As the natural man is a building—cell upon cell—so the spiritual man is a construction. And as growth in animal and vegetable life involves formative as well as causative force—the two being one, or at any rate working in harmony—so it is in spiritual growth. Christ has to be “formed” in the Christian (Gal. iv. 19). He has to characterise the Christian life. Every step upward is a step Christ-ward, and the converse is true, for every step Christ-ward is a step upward.

The
Teaching of
St Paul and
of Our Lord.

The teaching of St Paul on this subject may be set side by side with that of our Lord in John xv. The Christian is to abide in Christ; that is his business, and it involves daily spiritual contact, answering to the adhesion of the branch to the vine. Christ is to abide in the Christian; that is Christ’s business, and He effects it by the Spirit, Who is His representative in the believing heart. In this way the sap of the true vine runs into the branch, and on the strength of this vital energy the Christian lives the Christ-like life of devotion, purity, and loving service. Faith worketh by love (Gal. v. 6), that is to say, a justifying faith tends

The Flesh and the Spirit

to produce a loving faith. Such is the divine Gal. v. 16. method adopted for the development of each member of the Body of Christ. Baptism, the sacrament of the Spirit, formally introduces us into the vine, and personal faith turns the sacrament into a reality. The Lord's Supper, the sacrament of Christ crucified as the Bread of Life, is a special occasion for appropriating His love and making Him our own. But after all "it is the Spirit which quickens," and which causes us to grow (Eph. iii. 16).

VII

THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM

GAL. iii. 8

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Gal. iii. 8. THE Patriarch Abraham is not only named many times in Genesis, but is referred to in later books of the Old Testament—in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Kings, Chronicles, Nehemiah, the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Micah—fifteen books in all. In the New Testament he is named in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Hebrews, James, and Peter—eleven books; making twenty-six altogether. When we study the passages in which he is referred to, we find that many are strictly historical, whilst others bear on the peculiar position he occupied as the recipient of the three great charters concerning the land, the multitudinous offspring, and the blessing which was to come on all nations through his seed. Throughout the Bible God is known as the God of Abraham, and Israel as of the stock of Abraham.

The Blessing of Abraham

He was regarded as Father by the Jewish people Gal. iii. 8. in the time of Christ, and many thought it was —And the quite enough to say, “We have Abraham to our Promise to father,” though they had not Abraham’s real faith, Him. and though they did not the works of Abraham (John viii. 39). Part of the promise made to the patriarch was about to be fulfilled when the Lord Jesus was born (Luke i. 55, 73), though at first it was not clear in what sense the fulfilment of the promise and oath would be effected. It is evident from our Lord’s teaching that many would sit down with Abraham in the Kingdom, that is, would share the blessing made sure to him by covenant and oath, who could not claim him as their literal progenitor; and He accepted as practically true the view of the Jews that the faithful departed as well as the faithful living Israelites were in “Abraham’s bosom,” that is to say, in the sphere of being in which he, though nominally dead, still lived.

Everything, however, depended, so far as the The Faith of human side was concerned, on their faith. Were Abraham. they faithful? They had Abraham to their father. Were they lacking in true faith in Abraham’s God? Then they were outcasts, even though nominally Children of the Kingdom (Matt. viii. 11).

What did Abraham’s faith include? This has been already answered (see p. 156).

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Gal. iii. 8. But to this must be added one thing. Our Lord says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he should see My day, and he saw, and was glad" (John viii. 56). Who shall venture to interpret these words? Before we could certainly determine their meaning, we should have to know far more than we do concerning the angel of the Lord who appeared to Abraham, *i.e. was seen* by him (Gen. xii. 7, xvii. 1, etc.), who came and went and spoke to him as man with man, though recognised as the Judge of all the earth (Gen. xviii. 25). Whatever, or rather Whoever, it was that Abraham then saw, the way was being prepared for the manifestation of the Son of God, the Word made flesh, in the fulness of time. And Abraham may have seen greater things than these in the spirit world after he was "gathered to his people" (Gen. xxv. 8). He carried a blessed secret with him in all his wanderings, and not only looked for a city which had foundations, but for near relationship with an ever-living God Who Himself had prepared the city (Heb. xi. 16).

The Covenant with Abraham.

Reverting to the three great charters or grants made to Abraham, we find the first record in Gen. xii. 2, 3, 7, "I will make of thee a great nation"; "unto thy seed will I give this land"; "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In the next chapter the grant of the land is made permanent—"I will give it to thee and to thy seed

The Blessing of Abraham

for ever" (ver. 15), and the family or offspring of Gal. iii. 8. Abraham is to be practically countless as the dust (ver. 16). In the fifteenth chapter (vers. 18-20) the borders of the land are marked out. In the seventeenth chapter the grant takes the form of a covenant, with circumcision as a sign. Abraham is to be the father of many nations ; God is to be their God ; the land is to be an everlasting possession. In the twenty-second chapter, as the Lord could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, and repeated the promise of blessing, prosperity and multiplication, together with the declaration that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

How far have these promises been fulfilled ? Promises Fulfilled.

First, Moses says (Deut. i. 10), "Ye are this day as the stars of heaven." Secondly, after the many victories gained by David, we find Solomon reigning over the countries "from the River [*i.e.* the Euphrates] to the border of Egypt" (1 Kings iv. 21). There remains the blessing for all nations in the seed of Abraham. To see the beginning of its fulfilment we have to go on to Acts iii. 25, where we read, "ye are the children [*i.e.* the inheritors] of the prophets, and of the Covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away

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Gal. iii. 8. each one of you from his iniquities." This is indeed a blessing. It is needed by all nations, and it is applicable to all. But when we turn to the Epistle to the Galatians we find another view of the blessing. We read (iii. 8) that "the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations through faith, preached the Gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then they which be of [or from] faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Justification evidently formed part of the blessing. But a few verses further down we find that the gift of the Spirit also formed part; for we read that Christ was made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the nations in Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (ver. 14). Thus we detect three elements in the blessing promised at the dawn of patriarchal history: a conversion from sin; justification through faith in the Gospel; the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Have we yet exhausted the fulness of the promises made to Abraham? Certainly not. A blessing still stands over, both for Israel and for the world. When Christ the promised seed is manifested, Israel will be restored, the world will be evangelised, and the earth itself will be renewed.¹

¹ See the last three chapters of the author's "Grammar of Prophecy," Eyre and Spottiswoode.

VIII

THE ALLEGORICAL INTERPRE- TATION OF SCRIPTURE

GAL. iv. 24

Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

WHEN we aim at the true interpretation of the Old **Gal. iv. 24.** Testament, it is best to be guided by the use made of it in the New Testament. We find it there taken as historically true, and as an authority in doctrine. Its very wording is frequently referred to as authoritative. A view of the subject as a whole leaves no doubt in the mind that the Old Testament records are taken by the Lord and His followers as trustworthy. God has revealed Himself, not only in word, but also in deed.¹ Lessons for national and personal life are constantly to be drawn from the history of Israel as a whole, and from the experiences of individuals. The narratives are full of deep significance. They exhibit the ways of God, and the privileges and failures of men. If we read

Our Lord
and the Old
Testament.

¹ See "Old Testament Theology," Longmans & Co.

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Gal. iv. 24. attentively the first part of the tenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, we find several references to the period of the Exodus and to the desert life of Israel, and the narrative is all regarded first as true, and secondly as a lesson-book for Christian life, specially written to guard us from falling. This by no means detracts from its historical value. The things happened ; and the things were written ; and they were of a typical nature. All this is set forth in the chapter.

Allegory and Type. But an allegory is not quite the same as a type. A type means a shadowy outline, but an allegory means that an event has a spiritual significance over and above the historical. The Epistle to the Hebrews gives the interpretation of the Tabernacle types. Our Lord's teaching gives figures rather than types, as in His words concerning the destruction of the Temple which He was to rebuild in three days.

In the passage before us St Paul detects an allegorical significance in the narrative concerning Hagar and Sarah, and brings it out point by point. He regards the history as true, but shows that it also had a prophetic and doctrinal significance, which every well-instructed Jew would readily appreciate. It is interesting to compare the writings of Philo on the same subject. Philo was a Jew of the Pharisaic school, as Paul was. He was more or less Paul's

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contemporary, and was a student of the school of Gal. iv. 24. Plato and the Alexandrian Platonists. He seems to have been a born allegoriser, and gave a spiritual or mystical interpretation to the narratives contained in the Hebrew Scriptures. But how different in his method from that of St Paul! In his treatise, "On Seeking Instruction" (and also in that on the Cherubim), he deals with Sarah and Hagar. Sarah stands for what we may call primary instruction, and Hagar for that which is intermediate. Philo's extant works are very numerous, but they are disappointing, because their allegorical interpretation is often puerile, if not ludicrous.

Josephus, who lived at about the same period, is more of a historical and less of an allegorical interpreter, but occasionally he sees what may be called typical rather than allegorical interpretations, as when he expounds the parts of the Tabernacle as answering to land, sea and heaven; the twelve loaves as standing for the months; the branching out of the candlesticks as signifying the planets; the veils as the four elements; the priest's girdle as the ocean, etc., etc. ("Ant." 3. 7).

Both Cicero and Longinus refer to allegory as implying something more than is on the surface; but we judge from Philo that it is easy to be led to extremes in allegorical interpretation, while we gather from St Paul that the ancient records in

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Gal. iv. 24. Scripture not only give the history of the times, but also are often so worded as to enable us to draw spiritual lessons from their pages. After all, the literal interpretation of these precious Old Testament narratives is the safest and best to follow, and it will always be found fruitful in lessons for practical life.

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